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REYNARD THE FOX,

AFTER THE

GERMAN VERSION

OF

GOETHE,

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

J. WOLF.

LONDON.
WILLIAM PICKERING.
1853.

Reynard the Fox

AFTER THE GERMAN VERSION OF

GOETHE

BY

THOMAS JAMES ARNOLD ESQ.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

JOSEPH WOLF

Zwiſchen Ueberſetzung und Umarbeitung ſchwebend.
Göthe.

LONDON
NATTALI AND BOND, BEDFORD STREET
COVENT GARDEN
1855

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

TO

JOHN SMITH MANSFIELD, Esq.

My dear Mansfield,

BY your leave I dedicate to you this verſion of "Thyſtorye of Reynard the Foxe," though even without it I ſhould probably have taken French leave to do ſo, partly as a means of publicly expreſſing my regard and friendſhip for you, and partly owing to the fact that it was your approval of a ſmall portion upon which I at firſt experimented "that provoked me" to cope with the whole work. And I ſhall avail myſelf of this opportunity to ſay a few words about the Fable itſelf, and thus compromiſe with my Publiſher, who will inſiſt upon the neceſſity of ſome ſort of Introduction.

The hiſtory of this Fable as connected with that of Engliſh literature is certainly very remarkable. It appears at one time to have been nearly as popular in this country as it undoubtedly has always been in Germany. A proſe verſion of the ſtory, tranſlated from one in Dutch,[1] alſo in proſe, was one of the earlieſt productions of the Engliſh preſs, having been printed by Caxton in 1481;[2] but even

[1] *Die Hiſtorie van Reinaert de Vos.* Publiſhed at *Gouda*, in *Holland*, by *Gheraert Leeu*, A.D. 1479.

[2] This verſion has been reprinted with "the modification of ſome few words and ſentences" as being not "conſonant to our preſent notions of propriety" among the publications of the Percy Society, under the able ſuperintendance of W. J. Thoms, Eſq. Lond. 1844.

before that period there is abundant evidence that detached fragments of the ſtory were well known in England, eſpecially as a portion of the literature of the cloiſter.[3] After Caxton's edition, there were ſeveral other verſions in proſe, publiſhed from time to time, in which the language was modernized to ſuit the taſte of the age. Theſe publications continued into the 18th century, in the early part of which "The Hiſtory of Reynard the Fox" with continuations was ſold about the country as one of thoſe "chap-books" a collection of which is conſidered ſo valuable by Bibliophiliſts. There were publiſhed alſo two metrical verſions of the ſtory, one by John Shurley, in 1681, and the other by a nameleſs author in 1706.[4]

The work however, after paſſing "through the hands of old women and children only,"[5] ſeems to have fallen

[3] Introduction by Mr. Thoms to his reprint, p. lxxiii. *et ſeq.* and the Collection of Latin Stories, edited by Thomas Wright, Eſq., alſo among the Percy Society publications.

[4] Mr. Thoms gives a ſhort extract from each of theſe verſions (Introduction, pp. lxxxij., lxxxiv.), but ſpeaks of them in anything but terms of commendation.

[5] In the "Epiſtle Prefatory," by "James Drake, Fellow of the Royal Society and College of Phyſicians," to "The Perfect Picture of a Favourite: or, Secret Memoirs of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leiceſter, Prime Miniſter and Favourite of Queen Elizabeth," &c. &c. "Written during his life and now publiſh'd from an Old Manuſcript," (3rd edit. Lond. 1708) the following paſſage occurs:—

"There is an old *Engliſh* Book, Written about the time, that theſe *Memoirs* ſeem to have been, which now paſſes through the Hands of old Women and Children only, and is taken for a pleaſant delightful Tale, but is by wiſer Heads thought to be an Enigmatical Hiſtory of the Earl of *Leiceſter* and his Family, which he that compares with theſe *Memoirs*, will not take to be an idle Conjecture, there are ſo many paſſages ſo eaſily illuſtrable, by comparing it with theſe *Memoirs*. The Book, I mean, is the *Hiſtory* of *Reynard* the *Fox*, in which the Author, not daring to Write his Hiſtory plainly, probably, for fear of his Power, has ſhadowed his Exploits under the feigned Adventures and Intrigues of Brutes, in which not only the Violence and Rapaciouſneſs, but eſpecially the Craft and Diſſimulation of the Earl of *Leiceſter* is excellently ſet forth."

I have conſidered this paſſage worth preſerving as probably the moſt remarkable blunder on record concerning the origin and ſcope of the Hiſtory of Reynard. It is pointed out by Profeſſor Dreyer in his "*Abhandlung von dem Nutzen des treflichen Gedichts, Reinke de Vos, in*

into comparative oblivion in this country. Dunlop, in his *Hiſtory of Fiction* makes no mention of it. Warton, in his *Hiſtory of Engliſh Poetry* alludes to it only by an extract from Hearne, who merely ſpeaks of it in comparing it with another old book.[6] Hallam, indeed, in his *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, does make ſome mention of it,[7] but it is very ſcanty, and the account he there gives of the origin of the fable and its author he himſelf ſaw reaſon to correct.[8]

Of late years, however, Reynard has held up his head once more in this country, and ſeems in a fair way to "enjoy his own again." In the Introduction to Mr. Thoms' reprint of Caxton's book[9] will be found almoſt everything that can be ſaid upon the ſubject. There are alſo affixed to the metrical verſions of Mr. Naylor[10] and Mr. Holloway,[11] Introductions which contain a great amount of uſeful information relative to the hiſtory of Reynard.

It muſt be confeſſed, however, that all theſe and ſome other modern Engliſh writers who have treated on the ſubject are greatly indebted to the indefatigable Jacob Grimm, who for many years ſeems to have made Reynard his favourite hobby. But before we turn to his labours it may be as well to mention that the Great Exhibition of 1851, among other curious reſults, contributed not a little to the renewed popularity of the ſtory in this country. Every one remembers how attractive were the ſtuffed

Erklaerung der teutſchen Rechts-Alterthuemer" &c. (*Buetzow* und *Wiſmar*, 1768); a marvellous repertory of odd and out of the way learning.

[6] "The Merry Tales of the Mad Men of Gotham." Wart. Hiſt. Eng. Poet. III. p. 357.

[7] Vol. I. p. 183.

[8] Corrigenda, Vol. IV. It is not even mentioned in the Index. Taylor, in his *Hiſtoric Survey of German Poetry* (Lond. 1830) has a very meagre notice of the work: Vol. I. p. 111. There is a ſomewhat fuller account of it in D'Iſraeli's Amenities of Literature, Vol. II. p. 44.

[9] *Supra*, n. 2.

[10] Longman, Lond. 1845.

[11] Payne, Dreſd. and Leipz. French, Lond. 1852. Admirably illuſtrated by *H. Leutemann*; though his deſigns ſhow that he has ſometimes not quite ſucceeded in forgetting thoſe of the illuſtrious *Kaulbach* to the edition of Goëthe's verſion, publiſhed at Munich, 1846.

animals ſent by Herrmann Ploucquet, of Wurtemberg; and ſome of the groups being copied from Kaulbach's Illuſtrations to Goëthe's poem of *Reineke Fuchs*[12] they drew more general attention to the ſtory, and ſeveral verſions of it, ſuited to the capacity of the nurſery population, have ſince appeared.[13] So that there may be a hope perhaps that the fable may paſs back again through the hands of children and old women into thoſe belonging to "wiſer heads."[14]

It would take too much ſpace to attempt any account of the various verſions of the fable that have appeared in other European languages, or even to enumerate the different writers who have treated the ſubject in German and French. And Mr. Thoms in his Introduction has gone ſo fully into the ſubject, that I could do little more than follow in his footſteps.[15] Something, however, muſt abſolutely be ſaid about the origin of the fable.

Till Grimm took up the matter, all the world ſeemed to agree that the Low-German or Saxon poem *Reynke*

[12] See laſt note.

[13] *The Comical Creatures from Wurtemberg*, Lond. Bogue, 1851. *The comical hiſtory and tragical end of Reynard the Fox*, in *Stories, by Aunt Mary*, Lond. Houlſton and Stoneman, n. d. The *Story of Reynard the Fox*, in *Aunt Mavor's Picture Books*, Lond. Routledge, n. d. Beſides the editions enumerated by Mr. Thoms, may be mentioned *The Hiſtory of Reynard the Fox*, by David Vedder, illuſtrated by Guſtav Canton, of Münich and Düſſeldorf: Orr, Lond. Menzies, Edinb. (1852?); and *The Diverting Hiſtorie of Renard the Fox*, illuſtrated by J. J. Grandville: Lond. Willoughby, n. d. This latter verſion however has been in parts altered to ſuit the illuſtrations, which are not adapted to the ſtory in its uſual form, but ſeem rather intended for a collection of fables.

[14] An article from the pen of Mr. Carlyle, in the For. Quart. Rev. No. XVI. is evidence that before this time ſuch a reſult was in progreſs.

[15] In addition to the works referred to by Mr. Thoms, may, however, be particularized *Le Roman du Renard*, by *Octave Delepierre*, a Flemiſh advocate (Par. 1837) and *Les Romans du Renard*, by Profeſſor *M. A. Rothe*, a Dane (Par. 1845), each of which contains an admirable *précis* of this "hiſtory of hiſtories."

Among the various verſions that have been noticed, juſtice has hardly been done to one in Engliſh verſe, by D. W. Soltau, a German, Hamb. 1826. Both Mr. Thoms (Introd. lxix.) and Mr. Naylor (Introd. 40) ſpeaks of this in the ſomewhat contemptuous phraſe of "a tranſlation into Engliſh doggrel." The latter gentleman does not indeed appear to have ſeen this verſion, and poſſibly Mr. Thoms may have been miſled

de Vos[16] was the original ſtory, though the learned were divided in opinion as to whether the authorſhip reſted with *Hinreck van Alckmer*,[17] or *Nicholaus Baumann*,[18] who are ſuppoſed to have flouriſhed, the former about the cloſe of the 15th century, the latter in the earlier part of the 16th; but an earlier Flemiſh verſion has been diſcovered,[19] ſuppoſed to have been written about the middle of the 13th century, or earlier, the author of which is ſaid to have been named either *Willem die Madock* (or *Matoc*) or *Willem van Utenhoven*; for this queſtion is alſo *adhuc ſub judice*. All theſe verſions correſpond in great meaſure with the ſtory of our Reynard.

Grimm has collected, with immenſe induſtry, a variety of other legends, all bearing more or leſs on the hiſtory of Reynard, but none of them ſetting forth the fable in the ſame manner as at preſent. The earlieſt of theſe, *Reinhart*, a poem in High-German, is attributed to *Heinrich der Glicheſære*,[20] who, from internal evidence in

into the adoption of the term by the author himſelf, who in his preface (p. ix.) ſpeaks of a former German verſion of his own (*Braunſchweig*, 1823—1830) as a "tranſlation" (from the Low German) "in German Doggerel-Rhymes (the ſame metre in which the original is compoſed)." This Engliſh verſion has however conſiderable merit, and regarded as the work of a foreigner is a remarkable production. Soltau ſeems to have been fond of ſuch literary difficulties. He had before then tranſlated Hudibras (Riga, 1787, Königſberg, 1797) into German *Knittelverſen* (which he ſeems to have conſidered equivalent to our *doggrel*;) a feat which nearly rivals that of our countryman, Mr. John Towneley, who had previouſly tranſlated into French verſe the ſame work, pronounced by Voltaire to be of all books "le plus intraduiſible."

[16] Printed at Lübeck, 1498, of which only one copy is known, preſerved in the library at Wolfenbüttel. This was reprinted by Profeſſor Hackmann (Wolfenbüttel, 1711).

[17] "Scholemeſter un tüchtlerer des eddelen dogentlicken Vorſten un Herren, Hertogen von Lotryngen." So the pretended author deſcribes himſelf in the preface to the Lübeck edition of 1498.

[18] He appears to have been the Editor of the verſion publiſhed at Roſtork in 1517, the earlieſt known to exiſt, till the diſcovery by Hackmann of the Lübeck edition of 1498.

[19] *Reinaert de Vos*. A fragment of this work was edited by Grimm in his vol. entitled *Reinhart Fuchs* (Berlin, 1834), p. 115, and the whole poem, by *J. F. Willems* (Gent, 1836—1850) from a MS. purchaſed by the Belgian Government at Mr. Heber's ſale.

[20] The *Feigner*, or *Counterfeiter*, from an old German word *geli-*

the poem is conſidered by Grimm to have been a native of *Alſace* (*Elſaſs*) or *Lorraine* (*Lothringen*), living in German Switzerland about the latter half of the 12th century.[21]

It would carry me beyond my limits to enter upon any examination of the verſions of the ſtory that exiſt in Norman French ;[22] and this is of the leſs conſequence, as theſe Reynardine fables although extremely amuſing do not form one continuous hiſtory, and they differ conſiderably from that handed down in the poem of *Reynke*. It may be ſufficient to repeat Mr. Hallam's obſervation, that ſo popular did they become in France, as to naturaliſe in the language of that country the German name of the Fox, *Reynard*, which has entirely ſuperſeded the old French word *goupil*.[23]

Still further would it carry me, to review the various fables which have been collected by the induſtry of Grimm and others, as illuſtrative of Reynard's hiſtory. They ſhow how deep a root the ſtory in ſome ſhape or other had taken in the literature of the middle ages, if even it may not be traced further back. *Reinart* is mentioned in a *ſirventes* ſaid to have been written by *Richard Cœur de Lion* ; the fable is referred to by many Provençal writers ;[24] and it was certainly popular before the 11th century.[25] And as a proof how widely thoſe roots have ſpread, Grimm, in his lateſt work on the ſubject, has

cheſen, to diſſemble. Perhaps this epithet, for Grimm has ſhown it is not a family name, may be ſynonymous with *Troubadour, Trovatore*.

[21] Reinhart Fuchs, Einleitung, ciij. and p. 25. Sendſchreiben an Karl Lachmann von Jacob Grimm : Ueber Reinhart Fuchs. Leipz. 1840.

[22] *M. Méon* has publiſhed a collection of theſe ſtories under the title *Le Roman du Renart*, in 4 vols. (Par. 1824) ; and this has been followed by a Supplement with various readings and corrections by *M. Chabaille*. (Par. 1835.)

[23] From *Vulpes*.

[24] Grimm R. F. Einleit. cc. *et ſeq*.

[25] See the ſtory told by Guibert, Abbot of Nogent, Gr. R. F. Einleit. cxcv. and the poem entitled *Ecbaſis cujuſdam captivi per Tropologiam*, publiſhed in a collection of Latin poems by Grimm and Schmeller. (Götting. 1838.)

publiſhed a fable in modern Greek founded on an adventure between the Aſs, the Wolf and the Fox.[26]

I may be allowed however to adduce one or two further proofs of the extenſive ramification of the Reynardine fables.

M. Delepierre in the *prolégomènes* prefixed to his proſe tranſlation of the Flemiſh poem of Reinaert,[27] refers to a fable publiſhed in "The Flowers of Perſian literature,"[28] which is a counterpart of the adventure between Reynard and Iſegrim, related at p. 71 of the following verſion; except that for the Prieſt's larder in the European ſtory, a vineyard is ſubſtituted in the Perſian fable; it being notorious that Oriental Foxes (and it ſeems Wolves alſo) have a remarkable taſte for grapes.[29]

In a ſtill larger collection of Eaſtern fables recently publiſhed by Mr. Eaſtwick,[30] there is one[31] which bears a ſingular reſemblance to the general outline of the ſtory of "Reynard the Fox;" but the Jackal is the hero of

[26] Γαδάρου, λυκου καὶ ἀλουπῦς διήγησις ὡραία. Sendſchr. a. K. L., p. 75. Grimm thinks this poem belongs to the 15th or 16th century. Mr. Naylor ſpeaks of it as "a newly-diſcovered verſion of the old Epos in Greek!" (Introd. 17. n.) which expreſſion, eſpecially in context with the reſt of the note, ſeems calculated to miſlead the reader into a notion that the verſion was in the language of ancient Greece.

[27] *Supra*, n. 15.

[28] "Containing extracts from the moſt celebrated authors, in proſe and verſe, with a tranſlation into Engliſh, &c. By S. Rouſſeau, Teacher of the Perſian language." Lond. 1801, p. 198. In M. Delepierre's book, the date of the publication is given as 1804, probably by a miſprint, as the work was not likely to have had a ſecond edition.

[29] This is ſhown, as Mr. Naylor remarks, by the ſo-called Æſopic fable of "The Fox and the Grapes," and a paſſage in the Song of Solomon.

[30] "The Anvár-i Suhailí, or The Lights of Canopus; being the Perſian verſion of the Fables of Pilpay;" &c. Hertford, 1854. The original compilation appears to have been in Sanſkrit and made by Viſhnu Sharman; "whom we ridiculouſly call Pilpay," ſays Sir W. Jones. The author, or the work, appears however to have been called Bidpai, which probably accounts for the miſnomer. See Pref. to the Anv. Suh.

[31] Chap. ix. Story 1. p. 476. I have not been able to find any counterpart of this in the Engliſh Pilpay.

the tale inſtead of the Fox, and the humour of the ſtory is nearly evaporated by making the ſaid hero a good and virtuous beaſt, inſtead of a bad and hypocritical one.

The ſtory, which is remarkably tedious and proſy and interlarded with a number of other fables, runs thus:

Once upon a time, in Hindúſtan there was a Jackal, by name *Faríſah*,[32] who had turned his face from the world and his back on its vain affairs. He lived indeed among his fellows, but he abſtained from eating fleſh and ſpilling blood and hurting other animals.[33] His comrades began a wrangle with him and endeavoured to ſhow him the folly of his ways; pointing out to him that to paſs ſuch a life of auſterity was neither conſiſtent with the rules of good fellowſhip nor conformable with the dictates of reaſon; for the good things of the world were ſent here to be enjoyed. And being learned beaſts they quoted the Koran largely in ſupport of their doctrines.[34] *Faríſah*, however, was as learned as they, and he quoted the Koran too, and was not to be led aſtray by the temptations of the fleſh; and he ſtrove to make converts of his companions, but in vain. He ſoon obtained ſuch eminence for piety and virtue that the recluſes of that country were in the habit of imploring ſpiritual ſuccour from his ſoul; and his fame at length reached the ear of the Lion-King, *Kámjíú*.[35] The monarch deſired his attendance at Court, and *Faríſah* was too good a ſubject to diſobey the royal beheſt; moreover the King is repreſented as "terrible and dreadful, a monſter, frightful and awe-inſpiring." His Majeſty was charmed with the eloquence and wiſdom of the virtuous Jackal, and after a time propoſed to raiſe him to a high rank and entruſt to him all the affairs of government and finance. But *Faríſah* was as modeſt as he was virtuous, and in an exceſſively tedious addreſs he endeavoured to ſhow how unworthy he was of ſuch honours; juſt as newly-elected Speakers of the Houſe of Commons and Biſhops were wont to do in days long gone by. But in vain he ſought to depreciate himſelf; he but the more convinced King *Kámjíú* of his great fitneſs for the part aſſigned to him, and the King having previouſly promiſed him the royal protection againſt all enemies whom his elevation might raiſe againſt him, (for *Faríſah* had as many ſcruples upon this point as with regard to his own unfitneſs,) he at length yielded, took upon himſelf the adminiſtration of public affairs, and was diſtinguiſhed by

[32] Mr. Eaſtwick explains this to mean "catching and breaking the bones of the prey:" a deal of meaning for ſo ſhort a word; and rather "an extraordinary epithet" to apply to the aſcetic Jackal.

[33] Such is the character which, very early in our poem, Reynard is anxious to give himſelf.

[34] As the Ordinary in Jonathan Wild might perhaps, if he had thought of it, have perverted ſome paſſages in St. Paul's Firſt Epiſtle to Timothy in favour of his own views in behalf of punch.

[35] This name is printed ſometimes Kámjíú, and ſometimes Kámjúí. I cannot pretend to ſay which is correct. Mr. Eaſtwick ſays it means "ſeeking enjoyment."

the monarch with the moſt unbounded favour. This ſtate of things ſoon became irkſome to the other pillars of the State, and they ſecretly plotted the ruin of the good *Farîſah*. To carry out their wicked project, they ſuborned an individual to ſteal a portion of fleſh which had been ſet apart for the Lion's breakfaſt, and hide it in *Farîſah's* cell. The next morning the Jackal was not preſent at the royal levee, which was attended by all the other nobles and miniſters and notables of the kingdom; for he was abſent on ſome buſineſs of the utmoſt importance. The King occupied the morning in diſcourſing on the ability and underſtanding and knowledge of his abſent favourite; and when breakfaſt-time arrived his Majeſty happened to be more than ordinarily hungry. But the breakfaſt was not forthcoming, and the more they ſought for the royal portion the leſs they found it. The King became exceſſively enraged, as might be expected; and *Farîſah's* enemies took advantage of his abſence, and began to inſinuate doubts into the royal breaſt; ſome vouched various reports they had heard, or pretended to have heard againſt his honeſty, eſpecially with reference to the miſſing piece of fleſh; while others put forth "remarks intended to anſwer a different purpoſe than the apparent one,"[36] pretending to defend *Farîſah* as an inoffenſive and truſtworthy animal. Meanwhile, as the debate was a very protracted one, the monarch's wrath and hunger had become ungovernable, and he gave orders to ſummon *Farîſah* to his preſence. That hapleſs one, unaware of what his enemies had done in his abſence, boldly haſtened to obey the royal command. The Lion aſked, "What haſt thou done with the fleſh I committed to thy charge yeſterday?" *Farîſah* anſwered, "I conveyed it to the kitchen that they might bring it to the King at breakfaſt-time." Now the cook was one of the conſpirators. And he came forward and denied what *Farîſah* had ſtated, ſaying, "I know nothing about the thing; thou gaveſt no fleſh to me!" Then the King forthwith iſſued a commiſſion to enquire into the matter; and the commiſſioners ſearched *Farîſah's* abode for the fleſh; and as they had hid it themſelves they ſoon brought it to light and took it to the Lion. *Farîſah* at once perceived the plot that had been laid for him, but for the preſent, prudently held his peace. Of the number of the nobles preſent, was a Wolf, who to that moment had not uttered a word of reproach, and who reckoned himſelf among the juſt, and made as though he would not ſtir a ſtep without certain proof, and vaunted his friendſhip for *Farîſah*, and made a ſtrenuous ſhow of protecting him. But he now ſtepped forward and declared his opinion that as the treaſon was found out, the traitor ought to be puniſhed with all poſſible deſpatch. Then the Lion commanded the Jackal to be removed, and was plunged into deep thought and grief, and as it ſeems, forgot all about his breakfaſt. Meanwhile a *Lynx*, who was one of the ſpecial favourites of the King, adminiſtered a tolerably ſtrong reproof to his Sovereign for not having ſooner perceived the manifeſt treachery of

[36] Mr. Eaſtwick ſays he is compelled to make uſe of theſe *eleven* words, in order to convey the meaning of *one* in the original (*maghlatah*). What a language it muſt be!

the Jackal, and urged him how much better it was to care for the welfare of the State, than to ſhow indulgence to one traitor. So the fire of the King's wrath being re-kindled, he ſent to *Farîſah* to enquire if he had any excuſe to offer for his offence; but he being innocent had no excuſe to offer. Whereupon the King, putting aſide all covenants and promiſes, gave a poſitive order to put *Farîſah* to death. Now the Lion's mother was a wiſe and virtuous princeſs, who ſeeing that the King was acting precipitately, thought to herſelf that ſhe muſt go with all ſpeed and releaſe her ſon from the temptations of the devil. Then ſhe ſtayed the execution and came to her ſon *Kîmjîû*, and had an amazingly long converſation with him, and recommended him fully to inveſtigate the affair. And the Lion liſtened to the words of his mother, weariſome as they were; and he commanded *Farîſah* to be brought into his preſence, and deſired him to return to the diſcharge of his duties, and to think no more of what had taken place. But the Jackal was not ſo eaſily ſatisfied, and he alſo requeſted the King to inveſtigate the affair; declaring that he courted the ſtricteſt inquiry. The King could not ſee in what manner inquiry could be made, or by what means the inveſtigation could be carried on. The Jackal ſuggeſted, it might be as well to examine his accuſers ſeparately, who were all fleſh-loving beaſts; whereas it was notorious that he had not himſelf taſted fleſh for years. And he further ſuggeſted that threats might be uſed to induce them to confeſs the truth, and if they ſhould fail, promiſes of pardon, or even of reward, might be held out; ſo that his own innocence and unſtained honour would appear clear to all the Court. The King adopted this ſage advice, and the conſequence was that at laſt ſome of the conſpirators acknowledged their faults, and the reſt too, being compelled to confeſs, diſcloſed truthfully the real ſtate of the caſe. "Thus the ſun of the integrity of *Farîſah* came forth from under the cloud of doubt, and the duſt of uncertainty was removed from before the eye of conviction."[37]

Whatever may be the ſource of this fable, it would certainly appear that it contains the germ of the extant Hiſtory of *Reynard the Fox*; the ſecond part of that Hiſtory, as I have ſeen remarked ſomewhere, being in fact but a ſkilfully diverſified repetition of the firſt; each containing an account of Reynard's diſgrace, and ſubſequent pardon and favour. If this view be correct, it would tend to overthrow Grimm's theory, that the ſtory of *Reineke* is of German or Flemiſh origin.[38]

[37] Not to follow the tedioufneſs of the original, I have thought beſt here to cloſe the outline of the ſtory: but there follows a long palaver and confabulation between the King, his mother and the Jackal, before the latter can be induced to reſume the ſeals of office; which however he ultimately does to the ſatisfaction of all parties.

[38] Rein. F. Einleit. *Schluſs*, p. cccxii. and elſewhere. Grimm,

Of the ſcope and intention of the fable, many opinions have been entertained. As it now ſtands, it is clearly a ſatire upon all things in general, and upon the clergy in particular.[39] But Grimm is of opinion, that in the earlier verſions there is no genuine ſatire intended; that is, ſatire upon then exiſting perſons or things.[40] He conſiders, for inſtance, that the ſtory of the wolf's becoming a monk, is not meant as a ſatire upon the monks, but ariſes from his being deſcribed as *grey*, and hence *old*, and being called *grey-coat*, &c.[41] Grimm has alſo ſucceeded in ſatisfactorily diſpoſing of the various theories which have from time to time been put forth as to the allegorical meaning of the poem. The earlieſt of theſe, and which had become moſt generally accepted, was that of the learned Eccard, who contended that Reinhart was a certain Duke *Reginarius*, who was a ſubject and miniſter of *Zuentibold*, a king of Lorraine about the cloſe of the 9th century. According to the ſame account, *Iſegrim* was a Count *Iſanricus*, who lived ſome years later, and oppoſed the Emperor Arnulf, in Bavaria, Auſtria and Moravia.[42] This is the theory at firſt adopted by Mr. Hallam, though ſubſequently doubted by him.[43] It is manifeſtly untenable, for reaſons which Grimm has fully gone into. It was adopted with modifications by Mone, who conſidered that *Iſengrimus*, the Wolf, repreſented King *Zuentibold* himſelf, and that the Lion, who, in the Latin poem is called *Rufanus*, was his ſon, King *Arnulf*. The abſurd fancy of our countryman, Drake, who conſiders the ſtory as alluding to the Earl of Leiceſter, Elizabeth's favourite, has already been mentioned.[44]

It remains to ſay a few words with regard to the

though he refers to ſome other oriental fables (p. cclxxii. *et ſeq.*) does not allude to this one.

[39] It was probably for this reaſon a great favourite with Luther. Gr. R. F. Einleit. ccxii.

[40] Ib. cap. 12.

[41] Ib. Einleit. pp. xxxv. vi.

[42] Ib. ccli.

[43] *Supra*, n. 8.

[44] *Supra*, n. 5.

meaning of the names borne by the principal characters in the poem. Grimm ſays that theſe appellations are of three kinds:—1. Animal names, having a meaning in themſelves, unlike names of men; 2. Proper names of men, given to animals on account of their meaning; 3. Similar names given to animals with reference to ſome hiſtorical perſonages; though, as he ſays, it is not eaſy to diſtinguiſh between the 2nd and 3rd of theſe claſſes.[45]

It is not my intention to diſtribute the names of the poem into theſe different claſſes, but merely to conſider and explain a few of the moſt prominent.

Reynard, the Fox, as the hero whoſe name is the beſt known and moſt univerſally recognized, of courſe claims the firſt place. It is the German *Reinhart*, and the Flemiſh *Reinaert*, (*Reinike* is a diminutive,) in earlier times ſpelt *Reginhart*, *Raginohard*, and *Ragnohard*; and it means *counſellor*, *adviſer*; *ragin*, or *regin*, in Gothic, meaning *counſel*.[46]

Ermelyne, his wife, takes her name from the ſoftneſs of her fur, which is like that of the *ermine*.

Malapertus, his fortreſs, is *Malpertuis* (a not uncommon name in France), literally an *evil hole*.[47]

Iſengrim, the Wolf, is from the Flemiſh, *Iſan*, (*Eiſen*, Germ.) *iron*, and *grim*, *ſharp*; meaning *ſharp* as a ſword of *iron*.[48]

Gieremund, his wife, is *gierig*, *greedy*, and *mund*, *mouth*.

Noble, the Lion-king, requires no explanation.[49]

[45] Gr. R. F. Einleit. ccxxx.

[46] Ib. ccxl. In Chaucer, the Fox is called Dan *Ruſſell*, (Nonne's Preeſte's Tale, v. 15340,) which, in this poem, is the name of one of *Reynard's* ſons; it is from *roux*, red. In Spenſer, he is called *Reynold* (Mother Hubbard's Tale). Pope canonizes him as *Saint* Reynard.

[47] In *Reinhart*, this place is Germanized into *Uebelloch*. Gr. R. F. Enleit. cxliij.

[48] Grimm points out that in the northern tongues *grim* alſo meant *a maſk*; and he remarks that the name may have ſome reference to the fable of the *Werwolf*, as a monſter wearing a ſort of *iron maſk*; in a ſecondary ſenſe it ſignifies *a bit*, *frenum*, as by a ſingular analogy alſo does the Latin *lupus*. R. F. Einleit. ccxlii. n.

[49] The lion ſeems, in all ages, to have been looked upon as the king of beaſts. His bearing that character in this poem would ſeem to point

Chanticleer, the Cock, is alſo ſufficiently plain.

Partlet, his wife, is a name I have adopted as being familiar to an Engliſh ear. She is the *Pertelote* of Chaucer.[50] The word is applied to an article of apparel, (*portelet*, from *porter*, to carry,) and I believe means a woman's *neckerchief*. The alluſion probably is to the ring, or ruff round the hen's neck.

Bruin, the Bear, is from the colour of his fur.

Tybalt, the Cat, is the name I have alſo adopted, in lieu of *Hinze* of the German poem, as being more familiar to us.[51] I have however authority for it, for in the older poems, the cat is named *Tibert* (*Tibergus*, in the Latin verſion). This is a corruption from *Dietberht*, *Dietbrecht*, or *Dietprecht*, meaning *brilliant*, *glancing*.[52] Why this name ſhould be given to *puſs* is not very clear.

Bellyn, the Ram, is probably from *balare*, *to bleat*, in French *bêler*, whence *bélier*.[53]

Ruckenau, the female ape, is from *ruken*, *rucken*, *to pluck* (*vellere*) and *nauwe*, *cloſely* (*ſtrictè*), and the name perhaps has reference to the part ſhe plays at the cloſe of the poem.

There is no other name, that I am aware of, calling for any particular remark.

I have by no means exhauſted my materials, in fact they are inexhauſtible; but I muſt draw to a cloſe,

ne me Criſpini ſcrinia lippi
Compilaſſe putes.

Of the following verſion it does not, of courſe, become

to an oriental origin of the fable; Grimm, however, ſuppoſes the lion to have become familiarized to the Teutonic people by being exhibited at courtly ſhows. It is remarkable though, that the lion has formed part of the armorial bearings of the Counts of Flanders, at leaſt ſince the 11th century. Our Britiſh Lion, it is well known, is an impoſtor, and no more of a real lion than *Snug*. It ſeems that *Xerxes* is but the Hellenized form of the Perſian name *Schirſchah*, meaning *Lion-king*. Delep. 46.

[50] Nonne's Preeſte's Tale, vv. 14876, 15183. See alſo Shakeſ. 1 H. 4. III. 3. Wint. T. II. 3.

[51] Rom. and Jul.

[52] Gr. R. F. Einleit. ccxlv.

[53] Ib. ccxxxiv.

me to ſay anything. I will only obſerve, that whereas my immediate predeceſſors, Mr. *Naylor* and Mr. *Holloway*, founding their verſions upon the old German poem, have followed their original in adopting a ſhort or octoſyllabic metre, in mine which is entirely baſed upon Goethe's poem (for, in truth, I knew of no other when I firſt ſet about the paraphraſe), I have adopted our uſual heroic couplet as the moſt familiar repreſentative of the hexameters of my original.

The admirable deſigns by Mr. Wolf, which illuſtrate this volume, require no commendation from me.

Believe me,

My dear Mansfield,

Yours ever faithfully,

T. J. Arnold.

London, June, 1855.

REYNARD THE FOX

CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE ACCUSATION

REYNARD THE FOX.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

THE pleaſant feaſt of Whitſuntide was come;
The woods and hills were clad in vernal bloom;
The full-awakened birds, from every tree,
Made the air ring with cheerful melody;
Sweet were the meadows after paſſing ſhowers;
Brilliant the heav'n with light, the earth with flowers.

Noble, the King of Beaſts, now holds his Court;
Thither his ſummoned Vaſſals all reſort;
From North and South they troop, from Eaſt and Weſt,
Of Birds and Quadrupeds the Firſt and Beſt.
The Royal will had been proclaimed, that all
Of ev'ry claſs ſhould come, both Great and Small,
To grace the pomp of that high feſtival:

Not One ſhould fail; and yet there did fail One;
Reynard the Fox, the Rogue, was ſeen of none;
His many crimes from Court kept him away;
An evil conſcience ſhuns the light of day.
To face that grave Aſſembly much he feared,
For all accuſed him; no one had he ſpared:
Greybeard, the Badger, ſtood his friend alone,
The Badger, who was Reynard's Brother's ſon.
Begirt with many a Relative and Friend,
Who aid in war, in peace might counſel lend,
Sir Iſegrim, the Wolf, approached the throne,
And with due rev'rence bowing humbly down,
His ſuit in plaintive accents he began,
And thus his wrathful accuſation ran:—
"Moſt gracious Lord and King! in pity hear!
Let my complaint find favour in Your ear.
Happy the Subjects of Your glorious reign;
Here none who ſeek for juſtice ſeek in vain.
Vouchſafe then, to commiſ'rate my diſtreſs;
For Reynard's malice grant me ſome redreſs.
Me in all ways the Wretch hath wronged and ſhamed,
My Spouſe diſhonoured and my Children maimed;

Three lie at home, the youngeſt born of ſix,
Befouled and blinded by his filthy tricks.
" 'Tis long ago my plaint in Court was filed,
Showing by Reynard how I'd been beguiled:
The cunning Fox knew well a plea to draw,
And boldly he preſumed to wage his law:
He dared not come at the appointed day;
So I had judgment—and my coſts to pay.
All preſent here can vouch this tale is true;
But none can tell ſuch things as I can do.
Had I the tongues of Angels, lungs of braſs,
Whole days and weeks—nay, months and years
would paſs
Ere I could mention all my injuries,
Or tell one half his crimes and tricks and lies.
If all the Sheep on earth were killed and flayed,
And all their ſkins were into parchment made,
Not half ſufficient were they to contain,
The wrongs whereof I juſtly could complain:
The worſt is the diſhonour of my Wife;
That eats away my heart, and ſours my life:
Deſire of vengeance haunts me, night and day,
And vengeance I will have, come what come may."

He ceaſed, and ſtood in ſilent mood apart,
Gloom on his brow and anger in his heart.
Up jumped a Poodle from a neighbouring bench,
Hight Frizpate, who addreſſed the King in French.
And he complained, it was not long ago,
In winter, when the ground was deep in ſnow,
That not a ſingle Beaſt could hunt his prey,
He'd given much in charity away,
And for himſelf had but one ſauſage left;
By the falſe Fox of this he was bereft:
A foul and almoſt ſacrilegious theft!

Scant had he ſpoken, when with fiery eyes
Tybalt, the Cat, ſprang forth in angry wiſe,
And kneeling cried—"My auguſt and gracious King,
Reynard muſt anſwer many a grievous thing:
Moſt dreaded of all living Beaſts is he;
Ay, more than e'en Your ſacred Majeſty.
Grant me Your patience, though; and hear me out:
Frizpate hath little to complain about:
The thing he ſpeaks of happened years by-gone;
That ſauſage ne'er was his; it was my own,
My all, my only remaining ſuſtenance;

I ſtumbled on it by the mereſt chance.
I happened once into a mill to creep;
It was deep night; the Miller faſt aſleep:
Being at that time ſtinted in my diet,
I took the ſauſage; why ſhould I deny it?
But Frizpate filched it from me; ſo that he
Should be the laſt to ſpeak of robbery."

The Panther then—" Theſe jars are little uſe;
Reynard's miſdeeds admit of no excuſe:
He is a Robber and a Murderer;
That, in this Preſence, boldly I aver.
No kind of crime but he doth exerciſe;
Nought ſacred is there in his impious eyes:
His ſoul is fixed upon ungodly pelf;
Although the Nobles, nay, the King himſelf
Should ſuffer loſs of health and wealth and all,
And the whole State to hopeleſs ruin fall,
So he could get the leg of a fat Capon, he
Would never care the value of a half-penny.

" Let me relate the trick he tried to play
To Puſs, the gentle Hare, but yeſterday;—
Poor Puſs, who lives juſt like an Anchoret,
And never injured mortal Being yet.

Reynard, who latterly has given out
That he has turned aſcetic and devout,
Promiſed he'd teach him at the quickeſt rate,
How he, as Chaplain, might officiate;
'The ſervice you ſhall chant;' quoth he, 'as we do;
And we'll begin our leſſon with the *Credo!*'
So down they ſat together and began;
For he had no miſgivings, the good Man.
But not long time continued they to ſing;
For, 'gainſt the Peace of our dread Lord, the King,
And ſetting at defiance all his laws,
He ſeized on Puſs with his pernicious claws.
I heard their ſong as I was paſſing by,
And wondered that it ſtopped ſo ſuddenly;
I'd ſcarce proceeded though a dozen ſpan, ere
I took the Felon Reynard with the mainour.
Faſt hold had he of Puſſy by the throat,
That he could ſcarce articulate one note.
Certes, at that time had I not come up,
He'd gone that night in Paradiſe to ſup.
Yon ſtands our timid Friend; and in his fleſh
You ſtill may ſee his wounds all raw and freſh.
" Will not our Sov'reign Lord theſe ills abate?

Will you, brave Peers, and pillars of the State,
Such daily breaches of the peace permit,
Such violations of the Royal writ?
If there no ſtop be put to theſe foul crimes,
Much do I fear me, that in future times
Frequent reproach the King will have to hear
From all to whom Juſtice and Right are dear."

Again ſpake Iſegrim; " 'Tis even ſo,
Reynard has ever been the common Foe;
'Twere better he had periſhed long ago.
For while that Wretch ſhall live, no reſt will be
For honeſt, loyal, peaceful Folk, like me.
Albeit, according to the preſent faſhion,
The Felon ever meets with moſt compaſſion;
If ſuch crimes paſs unpuniſhed, not a year hence
We all ſhall rue our moſt unwiſe forbearance."

Undaunted by this hoſt of angry Foes,
The Badger, Reynard's Nephew, now uproſe;
Boldly prepared to plead his Uncle's cauſe,
All ſtained with crime and falſehood as he was.

" Now fair and ſoft, Sir Iſegrim," ſaid he;
" Your words ſmack leſs of truth than enmity.
'Tis known you hate my Uncle; and, in ſooth,

A fair word had he ne'er from your foul mouth.
Yet from your malice hath he nought to fear :
In the King's favor ſtood he now but here,
He'd give you ample reaſon to repent
Stirring in theſe ſtale ſubjects of complaint.
You take good care too not to ſay one word
Of ills that he for your ſake hath incurred.
Yet many of the Barons here well know
What happened not ſo very long ago ;
When you and he a ſolemn cov'nant ſware,
That friendſhip Each ſhould to the Other bear,
And, like true Comrades, Good and Evil ſhare.
I muſt relate, it is not long to tell,
The ſtrange adventure, which that time befell,
When you and he, in the cold winter weather,
Went through the country travelling together.

" It chanced a Carter, on the King's high road,
Was driving homeward with a heavy load ;
Your ſubtle noſtrils ſoon ſniffed out 'twas fiſh,
You'd ſoon have had them if you'd had your wiſh :
But they were cloſely packed; and what was
worſe,
You'd not a ſingle ſtiver in your purſe.

What then did my kind-hearted Uncle do?
Ah! what indeed hath he not done for you?
Down in the road he laid himſelf for dead:
'Twas a bold thought to come into his head?
And when the Carter ſaw him lying there,
To kill him out-an-end did he prepare;
But, cunning Reynard ſtill held in his breath,
Stiff'ning his limbs and counterfeiting death;
'Twas a conſummate maſterpiece of art,
That ſhowed him cool of head as brave of heart;
The Carter picked him up, and pitched him in his cart.
A cap he thought to make out of his ſkin,
And a bag too to keep his dollars in.
This did my Uncle do for Iſegrim:
When would he venture ſuch a riſk for him?
While onward went the Carter with his load,
Reynard kept throwing fiſh down in the road;
And Iſegrim, who was in haſte to ſup,
Faſt as he threw them down, gobbled them up.
Reynard grew weary of this ſport at laſt,
And thought 'twas his turn now to break his faſt;

So down he ſprang; but with diſguſt and wonder
Found Iſegrim had pilfered all the plunder:
He'd ſtuffed till he was nigh to burſt in ſunder.
He told my Uncle he had left his ſhare—
But nothing but the heads and bones were there.

"Another of his tricks I muſt narrate;
And ſo Heav'n help me, as I truth relate.
A Countryman had lately killed a Swine;
Large were its hams and noble was its chine.
Reynard had found out where the carcaſe hung,
And told it Iſegrim with truthful tongue.
And they agreed in common they would toil,
Would ſhare the danger and divide the ſpoil:
To Reynard's ſhare the danger fell alone;
But of the ſpoil, forſooth, he'd next to none.
The larder-walls were ſtrong and ſteep and high;
My Uncle clomb them, though, right ſkilfully;
True to his word, did he the Porker throw
Out of the window to the Wolf below.
Now, by bad fortune, there were in the grounds
A couple of moſt ill-conditioned Hounds;
They chaſed my Uncle with appalling din;
He got away, but not with a whole ſkin:

And ſtraight unto the Wolf his way did make,
To ſhow what he had ſuffered for his ſake,
And claim his lawful ſhare; then Iſegrim
Said he'd reſerved the prime tit-bit for him;
And thruſting in his cheek his lying tongue,
Produced the hook by which the Pig had hung.
His feelings Reynard had no words t'expreſs,
But what he felt all preſent here may gueſs.
"Scores of ſuch pranks I might remember well,
Were you inclined to hear, and I to tell:
But 'tis enough: were Reynard ſummon'd here,
Soon would he make his innocence appear.
"As for the other charge, 'tis moſt abſurd;
You, my dread Liege, and you, my Lords, have
heard
What Iſegrim has ſaid about his Wife,
Whom 'twas his duty to protect with life.
In all its details that affair I know;
It happened now juſt ſeven years ago,
That Reynard's boſom firſt received a wound
From the ſoft eyes of Lady Gieremund.
My Uncle is not to be blamed at all:
They met together at a fancy ball:

If'grim had gone upon a tour to Rome:
Huſbands, if wiſe, would always ſtay at home.
My Uncle proffered her his faith and troth;
She ſanctioned his attentions, nothing loth.
Is it not, therefore, a moſt crying ſhame,
That her own Lord ſhould fully her fair fame?
What any Man of honor would conceal
He ſeems to take a pleaſure to reveal.

"What have we next? This trumpery affair,
The Panther has brought up about the Hare.
Such utter traſh! what! ſhall a Maſter ſcruple
To chaſtiſe a perverſe or ſluggiſh Pupil?
If this be ſo, how are our Youth to be
Trained up in learning and morality?
The wiſeſt book that ever was compiled
Says, if you ſpare the rod you ſpoil the child.

"Then we have Mounſeer Frizpate, who com-
plains
He was deprived of his ill-gotten gains.
A pretty fuſs, forſooth, about a ſauſage!
'Twere better he ſaid nothing of that paſſage.
For it turns out 'twas ſtolen; and the Thief
Has the aſſurance now to aſk relief.

The Evil on his own head has recoiled:
'Tis only juſt the Spoiler ſhould be ſpoiled.
Is Reynard blamed, that from a Robber he
Has wrung the fruits of his diſhoneſty?
He did his duty, that deny who can,
Like a true Fox and loyal Gentleman.
Why, had he hanged him on the ſpot, I ween,
He muſt aſſuredly have pardoned been:
But he reſpects the King's Prerogative,
And therefore ſpared the Thief and let him live.
" But little juſtice can my Uncle get;
At leaſt, but little hath he got as yet;
Since the King's Peace was publicly made known,
No one hath led the life that he hath done,
With books he paſſes half his time away,
And takes but one abſtemious meal a day.
Water his only drink, and roots his food;
Poultry and butcher's meat he hath eſchew'd,
And cannot bear the very thought of blood;
With whips doth mortify his fleſh, and wear
Next to his very ſkin a ſhirt of hair.
I heard it mentioned only yeſterday,
By one who happened to have paſſed that way;

His caſtle, Malepartus, he hath ſhut,
And in the deſert built a Hermit's hut.
So lean and pale and haggard he hath grown
By his beſt Friends he ſcarcely would be known.
But 'tis the burden of a good old ſong,
That abſent Folks are ever in the wrong.
I only wiſh to Heav'n that he were here;
From all theſe ſcandals he would ſoon be clear."

Scarce had he ceaſed, when from a neighb'ring hill
A cry reſounded, like a clarion ſhrill.
The voice it was of honeſt Chanticleer,
Who with his Wives and Concubines drew near;
A dead Hen borne behind him on a bier.
It was the headleſs corpſe of young Greyleg,
As good a Fowl as ever laid an egg;
His fav'rite Daughter of a num'rous brood;
And impious Reynard now had ſhed her blood.

Foremoſt the ſad and mourning Sire doth ſtride,
His dappled wings low trailing by his ſide;
While after him two youthful Cock'rells march,
Each bearing in his graſp a burning torch;

Cantart of one, Cryart the other's name;
'Twixt France and Holland none more known
to fame;
They were the Brothers of the murdered Dame.
Four tender Pullets bore their Mother's bier,
Clucking ſo loud 'twas pitiful to hear;
Dire was the clatter, awful were the cries,
And the ſhrill clamor pierced the ſtartled ſkies.
Soon as the Heralds ſilence had reſtor'd,
Unto the throne ſtepped up the martial Bird;
O'erwhelm'd with woe he thrice eſſayed to ſpeak,
And thrice the words died choking in his beak.
Aſhamed ſo chicken-hearted to appear,
He gave one vig'rous crow his voice to clear,
And thus began:—" My Liege and Sov'reign,
hail!
With pity liſten to my grievous tale;
Before You ſtands the wretchedeſt of Cocks,
A hapleſs Victim of that cruel Fox.
" Whenas ſtern Winter fled on ſtormy wing,
And the glad Earth welcomed the cheery Spring,
How pleaſed was my paternal heart and proud,
As I ſurveyed my young and hopeful Brood:

Ten gallant Sons and fourteen Daughters fair
Partlett had hatched me, with parental care;
Partlett, the beſt and moſt ſubmiſſive Wife
That ever ſolaced a poor Huſband's life.
How joyed was I with her and them to rove,
And watch my Offspring full of life and love.
That time no terrors for their lot I felt,
For in complete ſecurity we dwelt:
Our home was in a convent's ſpacious yard,
Whoſe lofty walls its inmates ſafely guard;
And ſix ſtout Dogs belonging to the farm,
Who loved us well, protected us from harm.

" Reynard, it ſeems, that lawleſs Reprobate,
Like Satan, envying our happy ſtate,
Around our Eden often lay in wait.
Stealthily round the walls by night he'd creep,
And through the crannies of the gates would peep.
The truſty Guardians of myſelf and Wife
Oft made the Ruffian ſcamper for dear life;
Once they did catch him, and well tanned his hide,
He got away, though ſorely ſcarified;
And for a good while after let us bide.

" But ah, Sire! now begins my tale of woe:

Again he came, and that not long ago;
Within our convent walls he ſlily ſlunk
Clad in the veſtments of a holy Monk,
Wore a long frock, and ſandals 'ſtead of ſhoes,
And looked for all the world like a Recluſe.
He brought a Writ; 'twas ſealed with the Great
Seal;
'Twas genuine; I know the impreſs well:
This Writ proclaimed, in unambiguous words,
Peace ſhould be kept between all Beaſts and Birds.
As for himſelf, he'd vowed his ways to mend,
And think of nothing but his latter end;
He'd quite reform'd, he ſaid, his mode of life,
Had e'en forſworn the embraces of his Wife;
Water his only drink and roots his food;
All fleſh of every kind he had eſchewed,
And could not bear the very thought of blood.
But that my Wife and Daughters preſent were,
He ſaid he would have ſhown the ſhirt of hair,
Which he for penance next his ſkin muſt wear:
And, on the word and honour of a Fowl,
I myſelf ſaw the tonſure 'neath his cowl.
Tow'rds him I own I felt my heart relent,

He ſeem'd ſo really, truly penitent;
He ſpoke of his paſt ſins with ſuch compunction,
And of the Heav'nly grace with ſo much unction.
'Farewell!' at length he cried, 'I needs muſt go;
'I ſtill have many pious deeds to do;
'I have the Nones and Veſpers yet to ſay,
'And by a dying Vulture's bed to pray;
'He too was a ſad Sinner in his day.
'Bleſs you, my Children, may you ever thrive
'In the calm peace which this World cannot give.'
And ſaying thus, the odious Hypocrite
Croſſing himſelf departed from our ſight.
He left us, all his ſoul on miſchief bent;
While ours were filled with happieſt content.

"We ventured forth; and habit, more than fear,
Kept us at firſt to the old convent near.
Reynard we daily ſaw near our abode;
It ſeem'd ſome buſ'neſs led him oft that road;
His looks were ever bent upon the ground,
As though his mind were loſt in thought profound;
Or, if he chanced our Family to ſee,
It was 'Good'en' and 'Benedicite;'
And he would tell his beads and ſeem to pray,



And ſmite his breaſt, and ſo paſs on his way.
" Now, bolder grown, we further went abroad,
In ſearch of pleaſure and our daily food.
Ah! fatal error! from behind a buſh
Reynard among us made a ſudden ruſh.
Scatt'ring and ſquand'ring to the left and right,
Tow'rds our old home we took our ſcreaming flight,
In vain, alas! our Foe was there before;
In threat'ning guiſe he barred us from the door:
With furer aim this time he bore away
Of all my Sons the faireſt as his prey:
And I was there, and impotent to ſave!
My Son! my Son! my Beautiful, my Brave!
" And now he once had taſted of our blood,
It ſeemed as he diſdained all other food:
At all times came he on us—night and day—
Nor Dogs, nor Men, nor gates, kept him away.
Of all mine Offspring I'm well nigh bereft;
Five, out of twenty, all that now are left:
With grief and terror I am all but wild;
Soon will he leave me neither Chick nor Child.
Oh, give me juſtice! 'twas but yeſterday
He tore my Daughter from my ſide away;

Villain! without or pity or remorſe:
The Dogs were but in time to ſave her corſe.
See, there ſhe lies! my Child whom Reynard ſlew!
Help me, or he will have the Others too!
Oh! Cock-a-doodle, cock-a-doodle doo!"

Fierce was the fire that in the King's eye burned,
As to the Badger wrathfully he turned,
And thus began; "Come hither, Sir, and ſee
This ſample of your Uncle's piety!
Now by my Royal mane I make a vow,
This Miſcreant ſhall not paſs unpuniſh'd ſo,
If Heav'n preſerve my life another year.
But words avail not. Honeſt Chanticleer,
I claim the right your inj'ries to redreſs,
To ſhare, if not to leſſen, your diſtreſs.
Entombed ſhall your fair Daughter be, with all
The pomp befits a royal funeral:
A Vigil ſhall be ſung, a Maſs be ſaid,
The more to honor the illuſtrious Dead:
We with our Council will the while take thought
How may the Murd'rer be to juſtice brought."

In ſable was the Chapel Royal hung;
The Maſs was duly ſaid, the Vigil ſung:

The People, joining with the Quiriſters,
Sang *Domino placebo*, verſe by verſe.
I could relate who gave each verſicle,
Who the reſponſes; but 'twere long to tell;
And ſo I paſs it by: 'tis juſt as well.

Deep in a grave they laid the honor'd Dead,
And placed a marble tablet at her head;
'Twas thick, and ſquare, and poliſhed bright as glaſs,
With this inſcription graven on its face:

GREYLEG THE SPECKLED ONE LIES BURIED HERE
THE DEAR-LOVED DAUGHTER OF BRAVE CHANTICLEER
THROUGHOUT THE EARTH 'TWERE VAIN TO SEEK HER MATCH
NO HEN COULD OFT'NER LAY OR FEATLIER SCRATCH
IN REYNARD'S CLUTCH SHE DREW HER LATEST BREATH
AND PASSED UNTIMELY TO THE REALMS OF DEATH
LET ALL GOOD MEN HER MURD'RER EXECRATE
AND SHED A TEAR OF PITY FOR HER FATE

Meanwhile the King in ſolemn Council ſate,
Diſcuſſing with the Wiſeſt in his ſtate,
How they the Culprit might to Juſtice draw
And vindicate the Majeſty of Law.
At length it was reſolved, by one and all,

To ſend a ſummons to the Criminal
Commanding him, all buſ'neſs laid aſide,
He ſhould to Court repair, and there his doom abide.
The ſummons writ and ſealed, Bruin, the Bear,
Selected they to be the Meſſenger;
And him the King addreſſed; "Sir Bruin, ſee
That you perform your miſſion faithfully.
We know you ſtout of limb and brave of heart;
Yet would We counſel caution on your part;
Courage is oft but a poor match for art.
Reynard, remember, ſpeaks but to deceive;
Neither his lies nor flattery believe,
Or you may ſoon have too good cauſe to grieve."
"Fear not, my Liege," the truſty Bear replied,
Confident in his ſtrength and ſhaggy hide;
"Reynard, however trickſy he may be,
Will not, I wager, try his tricks on me.
Me or my miſſion an he treat with ſcorn,
I'll make him rue the hour that he was born."

REYNARD THE FOX

CHAPTER THE SECOND

THE FIRST SUMMONS

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

NOW with his ragged ſtaff the Bear ſet forth,
And with his beſt greaſe larded the lean earth.
Through foreſts vaſt he went and deſerts drear;
But his bold heart knew neither doubt nor fear.
At length the mountain region he approached,
Wherein Sir Reynard generally poached:
But Bruin would not tarry or delay;
Tow'rds Malepartus held he on his way,
The fav'rite faſtneſs of the Robber Chief;
And there he hoped to catch the wily Thief:
Thither for ſafety uſually he fled,
When threat'ning danger overhung his head.
At length Sir Bruin ſtood before the gate,
And, finding it was ſhut, he ſcratched his pate,
Not knowing whether beſt to go or wait.

Then he began to cry, with mighty din;
" What, couſin Reynard, ho! are you within?
Bruin the Bear it is who calls. I bring
A miſſive from our Sovereign Lord, the King:
He orders you, all buſ'neſs laid aſide,
Repair to Court and there your doom abide;
That equal right and juſtice may be done,
And ſatisfaction giv'n to every one.
I am to fetch you: if you heſitate,
The gallows or the wheel will be your fate.
Better to come at once, fair Couſin, ſith
The King, you know, will not be trifled with."
Reynard, from the beginning to the end,
Had heard this ſummons; and did now perpend
In what way he might puniſh his fat Friend.
Into a private corner he had fled,
Where he could hear ſecurely all was ſaid.
His keep was built with many a ſecret door,
With traps above and pits beneath the floor;
With labyrinthine paſſages and channels,
With ſecret chambers and with ſliding panels.
There he would often hide, the cunning Hound,
When he was wanted, and would not be found.

Amid this intricate obſcurity,
Where none could ſafely find his path but he,
Full many a ſimple Beaſt had loſt his way,
And to the wily Robber fall'n a prey.
Reynard ſuſpected there might be ſome cheat;
For the Deceitful always fear deceit.
Was Bruin quite alone? He felt afraid,
There might be others hid in ambuſcade.
But ſoon as he was fully ſatisfied
His fears were vain, forth from the door he hied;
And, "Welcome, deareſt Uncle, here;" quoth he,
With ſtudied look of deep humility,
And the moſt jeſuitical of whiſpers,
"I heard you call; but I was reading Veſpers.
I am quite grieved you ſhould have had to wait,
In this cold wind too, ſtanding at my gate.
How glad I am you're come; for I feel ſure
With your kind aid, my cauſe will be ſecure;
However that may be, at leaſt, I know
More welcome nobody could be than you.
But truly 'twas a pity, I muſt ſay
T'have ſent you ſuch a long and tedious way.
Good Heav'ns! how hot you are! you're tired
to death!

How wet your hair is, and how ſcant your breath!
Although no ſlight our good King could have meant,
Some other Meſſenger he might have ſent
Than Bruin, the chief glory of his Court,
His kingdom's main adornment and ſupport.
Though I ſhould be the laſt to blame his choice,
Who have, in ſooth, no cauſe but to rejoice.
How I am ſlandered well aware am I,
But on your love of Juſtice I rely,
That you will ſpeak of things juſt as you find
them;
As to my Enemies I need not mind them:
Their malice vainly ſhall my cauſe aſſail;
For Truth, we know, is great, and muſt prevail.
"To Court to-morrow we will take our way:
I ſhould myſelf prefer to ſtart to-day,
Not having cauſe—why ſhould I have?—to hide;
But I am rather bad in my inſide.
By what I've eaten I am quite upſet,
And nowiſe fitted for a journey yet."
"What was it?" aſked Sir Bruin, quite pre-
par'd,
For Reynard had not thrown him off his guard.

"Ah!" quoth the Fox, "what boots it to ex-
plain?
E'en your kind pity could not eaſe my pain.
Since fleſh I have abjured, for my ſoul's weal,
I'm often ſadly put to't for a meal.
I bear my wretched life as beſt I can;
A Hermit fares not like an Alderman.
But yeſterday, as other viands failed,
I ate ſome honey,—ſee how I am ſwelled!
Of that there's always to be had enough:
Would I had never touch'd the curſed ſtuff.
I ate it out of ſheer neceſſity;
Phyſic is not ſo nauſeous near to me."
"Honey!" exclaimed the Bear; "did you ſay
honey?
Would I could any get for love or money!
How can you ſpeak ſo ill of what's ſo good?
Honey has ever been my fav'rite food;
It is ſo wholeſome, and ſo ſweet and luſcious;
I can't conceive how you can call it nauſeous.
Do get me ſome on't; and you may depend
You'll make me evermore your ſteadfaſt friend."
"You're ſurely joking, Uncle!" Reynard cried;

" No, on my facred word!" the Bear replied;
" I'd not, though jokes as blackberries were rife,
Joke upon fuch a fubject for my life."
" Well! you furprife me;" faid the knaviſh
Beaſt;
" There's no accounting certainly for taſte;
And one Man's meat is oft Another's poiſon.
I'll wager that you never ſet your eyes on
Such ſtore of honey as you ſoon ſhall ſpy
At Gaffer Joiner's, who lives here hard by."
In fancy o'er the treat did Bruin gloat;
While his mouth fairly watered at the thought.
" Oh, take me, take me there, dear Coz,"
quoth he,
" And I will ne'er forget your courteſy.
Oh, let me have a taſte, if not my fill:
Do, Couſin." Reynard grinned, and ſaid, " I will.
Honey you ſhall not long time be without:
'Tis true juſt now I'm rather ſore of foot;
But what of that? the love I bear to you
Shall make the road ſeem ſhort and eaſy too.
Not one of all my kith or kin is there
Whom I ſo honor as th' illuſtrious Bear.

Come then! and in return I know you'll ſay
A good word for me on the Council-day.
You ſhall have honey to your heart's content,
And wax too, if your fancy's that way bent."
Whacks of a different ſort the ſly Rogue meant.

Off ſtarts the wily Fox, in merry trim,
And Bruin blindly follows after him.
'If you have luck,' thought Reynard, with a titter,
'I gueſs you'll find our honey rather bitter.'

When they at length reached Goodman Joiner's yard,
The joy that Bruin felt he might have ſpar'd.
But Hope, it ſeems, by ſome eternal rule,
Beguiles the Wiſeſt as the mereſt Fool.

'Twas ev'ning now, and Reynard knew, he ſaid,
The Goodman would be ſafe and ſound in bed.
A good and ſkilful Carpenter was he:
Within his yard there lay an old oak tree,
Whoſe gnarled and knotted trunk he had to ſplit;
A ſtout wedge had he driven into it:
The cleft gaped open a good three foot wide;
Towards this ſpot the crafty Reynard hied;
"Uncle," quoth he, "your ſteps this way direct;

You'll find more honey here than you ſuſpect.
In at this fiſſure boldly thruſt your pate;
But I beſeech you to be moderate:
Remember, ſweeteſt things the ſooneſt cloy,
And Temperance enhances every joy."
" What!" ſaid the Bear, a ſhocked look as he put on
Of ſelf reſtraint; " d'ye take me for a Glutton?
With thanks I uſe the gifts of Providence,
But to abuſe them count a grave offence."
And ſo Sir Bruin let himſelf be fooled:
As Strength will be whene'er by Craft 'tis ruled.
Into the cleft he thruſt his greedy maw
Up to the ears, and either foremoſt paw.
Reynard drew near; and tugging might and main
Pull'd forth the wedge; and the trunk cloſed again.
By head and foot was Bruin firmly caught:
Nor threats nor flatt'ry could avail him aught.
He howled, he raved, he ſtruggled and he tore,
Till the whole place re-echoed with his roar;
And Goodman Joiner, wakened by the rout,
Jumped up much wond'ring what 'twas all about;
And ſeized his axe, that he might be prepar'd,



And danger, if it came, might find him on his guard.

Still howled the Bear and ſtruggled to get free
From the accurſed grip of that cleft tree.
He ſtrove and ſtrained; but ſtrained and ſtrove in vain,
His mightieſt efforts but increaſed his pain:
He thought he never ſhould get looſe again.
And Reynard thought the ſame, for his own part;
And wiſhed it too, devoutly from his heart.
And as the Joiner coming he eſpied,
Armed with his axe, the jeſting Ruffian cried;
"Uncle, what cheer? Is th' honey to your taſte?
Don't eat too quick, there's no ſuch need of haſte.
The Joiner's coming; and I make no queſtion,
He brings you your deſert, to help digeſtion."
Then deeming 'twas not longer ſafe to ſtay,
To Malepartus back he took his way.
The Joiner, when he came and ſaw the Bear;
Off to the ale-houſe did with ſpeed repair,
Where oft the Villagers would ſit and ſwill;
And a good many fat carouſing ſtill.
"Neighbours," quoth he, "be quick! In my court-yard

A Bear is trapped; come, and come well prepar'd:
I vow, 'tis true." Up ſtarted every Man,
And pell-mell, helter-ſkelter off they ran;
Seizing whatever handieſt they could take,
A pitch-fork One, Another graſps a rake,
A Third a flail; and arm'd was ev'ry one
With ſome chance weapon, ſtick or ſtake or ſtone.
The Prieſt and Sacriſtan both joined the throng,
A mattock this, the other bore a prong.
The Parſon's Maid came too; (Judith her name,
And fair was ſhe of face and fair of fame;
His Rev'rence could not live without her aid;
She cooked his victuals, and ſhe warmed his bed.)
She brought the diſtaff ſhe had uſed all day,
With which ſhe hoped the luckleſs Bear to pay.
Bruin with terror heard th' approaching roar,
And with freſh deſperation tugged and tore:
His head he thus got free from out the cleft:
But hide and hair, alack! behind he left;
While from the hideous wound the crimſon blood
Adown his breaſt in copious currents flow'd.
Was never ſeen ſo pitiable a Beaſt!
It holp him nought his head to have releaſ'd:

His feet ſtill being faſtened in the tree,
Theſe with one more huge effort he ſet free.
But than his head no better fared his paws;
For he rent off alike the ſkin and claws.
This was in ſooth a different ſort of treat
From what he had expected there to meet;
He wiſhed to Heav'n he ne'er had ventured there:
It was a moſt unfortunate affair!

Bleeding upon the ground he could but ſprawl,
For he could neither ſtand, nor walk, nor crawl.
The Joiner now came up with all his Crew:
To the attack with eager ſouls they flew;
With thwacks and thumps belabouring the poor
Wight;
They hoped to ſlay him on the ſpot outright.
The Prieſt kept poking at him with his prong,
From afar off—the handle being long.
Bruin in anguiſh rolled and writhed about;
Each howl of his called forth an anſwering ſhout.
On every ſide his furious Foemen ſwarmed,
With ſpits and ſpades, with hoes and hatchets
armed;
Weapons all wielded too by nerves of pith:

His large ſledge-hammer bore the ſinewy Smith.
They ſtruck, they yelled, they pelted and they
hallooed;
While in a pool of filth poor Bruin wallowed.
To name theſe Heroes were too long by half:
There was the long-noſed Jem, the bandy Ralph;
Theſe were the worſt; but crooked-fingered Jack,
With his flail fetched him many a grievous
thwack:
His Step-brother, hight Cuckelſon the Fat,
Stood, but aloof, with an enormous bat:
Dame Judith was not idle with her diſtaff:
While Gaffer Grumble ſtirr'd him up with his
ſtaff;
And Men and Women many more were there,
All vowing vengeance 'gainſt th' unhappy Bear.
The foremoſt—in the noiſe—was Cuckelſon:
He boaſted that he was Dame Gertrude's Son;
And all the World believed that this was true;
But who his Father, no one ever knew.
Fame indeed ſaid—but Fame is ſuch a Liar,
That Brother Joſeph, the Franciſcan Friar,
Might, if he choſe, claim the paternity;

Or ſhare the ſame with Others, it might be.
Now ſtones and brick-bats from all ſides were
ſhower'd;
And Bruin, tho' he ſcorned to die a Coward,
Was by oppoſing numbers all but overpower'd.
The Joiner's Brother then, whoſe name was Scrub,
Whirling around his head a maſſive club,
Ruſhed in the midſt, with execrations horrid,
And dealt the Bear a blow plump on the forehead.
That blow was ſtruck with ſuch tremendous might,
Bruin loſt both his hearing and his ſight.
One deſp'rate plunge he made though, and as luck
Would have it, 'mong the Women ran a-muck.
Ye Saints! how they did ſcream and ſhriek and
ſquall!
Over each other how they tumbled all!
And ſome fell in the ſtream that ran hard by,
And it was deep juſt there, unluckily.
The Paſtor cried aloud—"Look, neighbours, look!
See, yonder—in the water—Jude, my Cook;
With all her wool—ſhe's left her diſtaff here,
Help! ſave her! you ſhall have a caſk of beer;
As well as abſolution for paſt crimes,

And full indulgence for all future times."
Fired with the promiſed boon, they left the Bear,
Who lay half dead, all ſtunned and ſtupid there;
Plunged to the Women's reſcue; fiſhed out five;
All that had fallen in, and all alive.
The miſerable Bear, while thus his Foes
Were buſied, finding reſpite from their blows;
Managed to ſcramble to the river's brim;
And in he rolled; but not with hopes to ſwim;
For life a very burden was to him:
Thoſe ſhameful blows no more he could abide;
They pierced his ſoul more than they pained his hide.
He wiſhed to end his days in that deep water,
Nor feared t' incur the perils of ſelf-ſlaughter.
But no! againſt his will he floated down;
It ſeemed in truth he was not born to drown.
Now when the Bear's eſcape the Men deſcried,
"Oh ſhame! inſufferable ſhame!" they cried;
Then in a rage began to rate the Women;
"See where the Bear away from us is ſwimming;
Had you but ſtaid at home, your proper place,
We ſhould not have encountered this diſgrace."

Then to the cleft tree turning, they found there
The bleeding ſtrips of Bruin's hide and hair;
At this into loud laughter they broke out,
And after him thus ſent a jeering ſhout;
" You'll ſure come back again, old Devil-ſpawn,
As you have left your wig and gloves in pawn."
Thus inſult added they to injury,
And Bruin heard them and ſore hurt was he;
He curſed them all, and his own wretched fate;
He curſed the Honey that had been his bait;
He curſed the Fox who led him in the Snare;
He even curſed the King who ſent him there.
Such were his pray'rs as quick he ſwept along,
For the ſtream bore him onward, ſwift and ſtrong;
So, without effort, in a little while,
He floated down the river near a mile.
Then with a heavy heart he crawled on ſhore,
For he was wet and weary, ſick and ſore.
The Sun throughout his courſe would never ſee
A Beaſt in ſuch a ſhocking plight as he.
Hard and with pain he fetched his lab'ring breath,
And every moment looked and wiſhed for death.
His head ſwam round with a ſtrange ſort of diz-

As he thought o'er the whole perplexing buſineſs.
"Oh, Reynard!" he gaſped out, "Thou Traitor vile!
Oh, Scoundrel, Thief!" and more in the ſame ſtyle.
He thought upon the tree; the jibes and knocks
He had endured; and once more curſed the Fox.
Reynard well pleaſed t' have cozened Uncle Bruin,
And lured him, as he thought, to his ſure ruin,
Had ſtarted off upon a Chicken-chaſe;
He knew, cloſe by, a tried and fav'rite place.
A fine fat Pullet ſoon became his prey,
Which in his felon clutch he bore away:
This he devoured, bones and all, right ſpeedily;
And, if the truth be ſpoken, ſomewhat greedily.
Prepared for any chance that might betide,
He ſlowly ſauntered by the river ſide;
Stopping from time to time to take a draught;
And thought aloud, while in his ſleeve he laugh'd:
"How pleaſed I am t' have trick'd that ſtupid Bear!
Honey he longed for, and has had his ſhare;

I'm not to blame; I warned him of the *wax*:
By this he knows how taſtes a Joiner's axe.
I'm glad to have ſhown him this good turn, as he
Has ever been ſo good and kind to me.
Poor Uncle! well; by chance ſhould he be dead,
I'll for his ſoul have ſcores of maſſes ſaid.
It is the leaſt methinks that I can do."
While muſing thus he chanced to look below;
And ſaw Sir Bruin on the other ſhore
Writhing and welt'ring in a pool of gore.
Reynard could ſcarce, ſo great was his ſurpriſe,
Believe the evidence of his own eyes.

"Bruin alive! and in this place!" quoth he,
"Why, Joiner, what a Booby you muſt be!
A Bear's hams make the moſt delicious food!
You could not ſurely know they were ſo good.
A diſh, by which a Duke would ſet vaſt ſtore,
To be ſo ſlighted by a ſtupid Boor!
My Friend has left though, I am glad to ſee,
A pledge for your kind hoſpitality."

Thus ſpake the Fox, as he beheld the Bear,
Lying all weary-worn and bleeding there.
Then he called out—"Why, Uncle, is that you

What upon earth can you have here to do?
You've ſomething at the Joiner's left, I fear,
Shall I run back and let him know you're here?
Prithee, is ſtolen Honey very ſweet?
Or did you honeſtly pay for your treat?
How red your face is! you have ate too quick;
I truſt you have not gorged till you are ſick.
Really you ſhould have been more moderate;
I could have got you lots at the ſame rate.
Nay, I declare—I truſt there is no harm in't—
You ſeem t' have on ſome ſort of Prieſtly garment;
With ſcarlet gloves, and collar too, and hat;
Rather a dangerous prank to play is that.
Yet, now I look more cloſe, your ears are gone, ſure;
Have you of late ſubmitted to the tonſure,
And did the ſtupid Barber cut them off?"
Thus did the cruel-hearted Reynard ſcoff;
While Bruin, all unable to reply,
Could only moan with grief and agony.
No longer could he theſe ſharp jibes ſuſtain,
So crept into the water back again:
He floated downward with the ſtream once more,
And again landed on the ſhelving ſhore.

There in a miſerable ſtate he lay,
And piteouſly unto himſelf did ſay;
" That Someone would but ſlay me here out-
right!
Ne'er ſhall I reach the Court in this ſad plight;
But on this ſpot in ſhame and grief ſhall die,
A mortal proof of Reynard's treachery.
Oh! I will have a dire revenge, I ſwear,
If it pleaſe Providence my life to ſpare."
With firm reſolve his pain to overcome,
At length he ſtarted on his journey home;
And after four long toilſome days were paſt,
Crippled and maimed, he reached the Court at laſt.
When the King ſaw the Bear ſo ſorely maimed,
"Great Heaven! Is this Sir Bruin?" he exclaimed;
" My truſty Meſſenger in ſuch a ſtate!"
" Ah, Sire!" ſaid Bruin, " and is this the fate
That ſhould a King's Ambaſſador befall?
But ſpare my breath—the Fox has done it all."
Then ſpake the King in wrath; " Now by the
Maſs,
This outrage vile ſhall not unpuniſhed paſs.
What! ſhall the nobleſt Baron of our court

Afford this Traitor means of ſavage ſport?
No; by my ſceptre and my crown I ſwear,
If crown or ſceptre I am fit to bear,
Or of ſtern Juſtice longer wield the ſword,
Right ſhall be done! Pledged is my royal word."
Summoned in haſte the Council promptly ſate,
On this freſh outrage to deliberate.
Subject to the King's will, they all agree
That Reynard once again muſt ſummoned be;
At Court he ſhould appear; and, if he might,
Anſwer th' impeachment and defend his right:
Tybalt, the Cat, ſhould now the ſummons carry,
As he was well known to be wiſe and wary.
So counſelled One and All: the King concurr'd;
And thus to Tybalt ſpoke his Sov'reign Lord;
" Now mark your miſſion and the ſequence well;
If a third ſummons Reynard ſhould compel,
He and his whole Race, I have ſworn an oath,
Shall feel the deadly power of my wrath.
So let him come in time, if he be wiſe;
Nor this laſt warning reckleſſly deſpiſe."
Tybalt replied; " My Liege, I fear that I

Shall ſcarcely proſper in this embaſſy;
Not that indeed I ought to ſay, 'I fear;'
To do Your will all danger would I dare:
I merely hint, that for this taſk, of All
I am leaſt fit, being ſo very ſmall.
If the ſtout, ſtalwart Bear was ſo abuſed
What can poor I do? Hold me, pray, excuſed."
"Nay," ſaid the King, "Wiſdom and Wit, 'tis known,
Are not the attributes of Strength alone.
How often do we ſee a little Man
Succeed more neatly than a great one can.
Though not a Giant, you are learned and wiſe,
And Wiſdom compenſates for want of Size."
The Cat was flattered and he bowed his head;
"Your will be done, my Sov'reign Liege," he ſaid;
"If on my right I only ſee a ſign,
A proſp'rous journey will, I know, be mine."

REYNARD THE FOX

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE SECOND SUMMONS

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

NOT far did Tybalt on his journey get,
Before a Magpie on the wing he met:
"Hail, noble Bird;" quoth he, "vouch-
safe to 'light,
As a propitious omen, on my right."
The Magpie ſcreeched; his onward way he cleft;
Then ſtooped his wing and perched on Tybalt's left.
The Cat much ſerious ill from this forebode,
But on it put the beſt face that he could.
To Malepartus he proceeded ſtraight,
And found Sir Reynard ſitting at his gate.
"Good Even, gentle Couſin," Tybalt ſaid,
"May bounteous Heav'n ſhow'r bleſſings on your
head.
I bring ſad news; the King has ſent to ſay,
If you come not to Court without delay,
Not only your own life will forfeit be,

His wrath will fall on your whole Family."

" Welcome, dear Nephew," quoth the Fox;

" not leſs

I wiſh you ev'ry kind of happineſs."

Though thus he ſpoke, it went againſt his will;
For in his heart he wiſhed him ev'ry ill;
And thought 'twould be the very beſt of ſport
To ſend him alſo back diſgraced to Court.

" Nephew," ſaid he; for he ſtill called him

Nephew;

" Step in and ſee what ſupper we can give you;
You muſt be tired; and all phyſicians tell ye,
You can't ſleep ſoundly on an empty belly.
I am your Hoſt for once; you ſtay to night;
And we'll to Court ſtart with tomorrow's light.
For you of all my Kindred love I beſt,
To you confide myſelf the readieſt.
That brutal Bear was here the other day,
Bouncing and ſwaggering in ſuch a way,
That not for all the world contains would I
Myſelf have truſted in his company.
But having you my Comrade, travelling
Will be a very diff'rent ſort of thing.

So you will ſhare our potluck, then to bed,
And off we ſtart by ſunriſe: that's agreed."

"Nay," replied Tybalt, "why not go tonight?
The roads are dry; the moon is ſhining bright."

May be, the omen on his mem'ry ſtruck;
May be, he had no fancy for potluck.

"I am not fond of trav'lling after nightfall;"
Replies the Fox; "ſome People are ſo ſpiteful;
Who, though by day they civilly would greet you,
Would cut your throat, if they by night ſhould
meet you."

"Well but," ſays Tybalt, in a careleſs way,
"What have you got for ſupper if I ſtay?"

Says Reynard, "Well, I candidly avow,
Our larder is but poorly ſtocked juſt now;
But we've ſome honey-comb, if you like that."

"Like ſuch infernal rubbiſh!" quoth the Cat,
And ſpat, and ſware a loud and luſty oath,
As he was wont to do when he was wroth;
"If you indeed had got a Mouſe or ſo,
I ſhould much reliſh them; but honey—pooh!"

"What!" anſwers Reynard, "are you fond of
Mice?

I think I can procure ſome in a trice,
If you're in earneſt; for the Prieſt, my Neighbor,
Vows that to keep them down is quite a labor;
In his tithe barn ſo num'rouſly they ſwarm;
They do him, he declares, no end of harm."

Thoughtleſſly ſaid the Cat, "Do me the favor
To take me where theſe Mice are; for in flavor
All other game they beat out of the field;
Beſide the ſport which they in hunting yield."

"Well," ſays the Fox, "now that I know your taſte,
I'll promiſe you ſhall have a ſumptuous feaſt.
We'll ſtart at once and not a moment waſte."

Tybalt had faith and followed; quickly they
Reached the Prieſt's tithe barn, built with walls of clay.
Only the day before, Reynard a hole
Had through it ſcratched, and a fat Pullet ſtole.
Martin, the Prieſt's young Son—or Nephew rather,
For he was ne'er allowed to call him *Father*,—
Had found the theft out, and, if poſſible,
Determined to find out the Thief as well;
So, craftily, a running nooſe he tied,

And fixed it firmly by the hole inſide;
Thus hoped he to avenge the ſtolen Pullet,
Should the Thief chance return, upon his gullet.

Reynard, ſuſpecting ſomething of the ſort,
Said, "Nephew dear, I wiſh you lots of ſport;
In at this op'ning you can ſafely glide;
And while you're mouſing, I'll keep watch outſide.
You'll catch them by the dozen, now 'tis dark:
How merrily they chirrup; only hark!
I ſhall be waiting here till you come back;
So come as ſoon as you have had your whack.
Tonight, whatever happens, we'll not part,
As we ſo early in the morning ſtart."

Tybalt replies, as any prudent Beaſt would,
"I've no great faith, I own it, in the Prieſthood:
Is't quite ſafe, think ye?" Reynard anſwers, "Well;
Perhaps not: 'tis impoſſible to tell;
We'd beſt return at once, as you're ſo nervous;
My Wife, I'll anſwer for it, will not ſtarve us;
She'll toſs us up for ſupper ſomething nice,
If not quite ſo much to your taſte as Mice."

Stung to the quick by Reynard's taunting tongue,
Into the op'ning Tybalt boldly ſprung,

And plunged directly in the ready ſnare:
Such entertainment and ſuch dainty fare
Did the ſly Fox for all his Gueſts prepare.
When the Cat felt the ſtring about his neck,
He gave a ſideward ſpring and got a check;
This made him throw a wond'rous ſomerſaut,
And, the nooſe tight'ning, he was fairly caught.
To Reynard then he loudly called for aid,
Who liſt'ning at the hole in mock'ry ſaid;
"Nephew, how are the Mice? I hope they're fat;
They are well fed enough, I'm ſure of that:
If the Prieſt knew his vermin were your veniſon,
I'm ſure he'd bring ſome muſtard, with his beniſon;
Or ſend his Son with it,—that beſt of Boys.
But Nephew, prithee, why make ſuch a noiſe?
Is it at Court the faſhion ſo to ſing
At meals? It ſeems an inconvenient thing.
Oh! but I wiſh the gentle Iſegrim
Were in your place; how I would badger him!
I ſtake my tail on't I would make him pay
For all the ill he's wrought me many a day."
Then off he ſtarts t' indulge ſome other vice;
No matter what; he was not over nice:



REYNARD THE FOX

There never lived a Soul, at any time,
More foully tainted with all kinds of crime;
Murder and theft, adultery and perjury;
'Twas paſt the ſkill of ſpiritual ſurgery:
He'd broke the Ten Commandments o'er and o'er,
And would as readily have broke a ſcore.

He fancied now ſome freſh ſport might be found
In a ſhort viſit to Dame Gieremund;
This he propoſed with a two-fold intent;
To learn the grounds of Iſegrim's complaint;
And likewiſe to renew an ancient ſin,
Which he eſpecially delighted in.
If'grim, he knew, was abſent at the Court;
And it was common ſubject of report,
The She-Wolf's paſſion for the ſhameleſs Fox
Had made her Huſband's hatred orthodox.

When Reynard to the Wolf's retreat had come,
He found Dame Gieremund was not at home:
"God bleſs you, my Stepchildren dear:" quoth he;
And to the young ones nods good-humour'dly:
The object of his call he never mentions;
But haſtes away after his own inventions.

Dame Gieremund returns at break of day;

" Has no one called here, while I've been away?"
Aſks ſhe; her Children anſwer, " Yes, Mamma;
We've had a viſit from our Godpapa,
Reynard; he called us his Stepchildren though;
What did he mean by that?" " I'll let him know;"
Quoth ſhe, and angrily ſhe hurried off,
Determined to avenge this cutting ſcoff.
She knew where it was likely ſhe ſhould meet him;
And when ſhe found him thus began to greet him:
" Wretch, Monſter, Brute!" her rage was quite
bewild'ring;
" How dare you uſe ſuch language to my Children?
You, of all Men, t' attack my character!
But you ſhall dearly pay for it, I ſwear."
With that ſhe flew at him, and—oh diſgrace!
She pulled him by the beard and ſcratched his face.
Then firſt he felt the power of her teeth,
As, grappled by the throat; he gaſped for breath;
He 'ſcaped her clutches though, and fled amain;
She, after him; and mark, what happened then.
It chanced a ruined abbey ſtood in ſight,
And thitherward in haſte both bent their flight:
A fiſſure was there in the crumbling wall,

Narrow it was and low and all ways ſmall;
Through this the ſubtle Fox contrived to paſs,
Though hardly, thin and lanky as he was;
My Lady, who was any thing but ſlim,
Rammed in her head and tried to follow him;
But faſt ſhe ſtuck—it ſeemed Fate helped the
Blackguard,—
And ſhe could neither forward get nor backward.
Soon as the Fox ſaw how ſhe was confin'd,
Quick he whipped round and fell on her behind;
And not without full many a bitter ſcoff,
For all ſhe'd done he amply paid her off.
Wearied with vengeance, if not ſatiated,
The miſchief-loving Rogue at length retreated.
And when Dame Gieremund at length got free,
No where in all the neighborhood was he.
Homeward, with tott'ring ſteps, ſhe then return'd;
While with revenge and ſhame her panting boſom
burn'd.

Return we now to Tybalt; when he found
How in that ſlipknot durance he was found,
That ſtrength and ſtruggling nothing might avail,
After the mode of Cats, he 'gan to wail.

This Martin heard, and ſwift ſprang out of bed:
"The Lord be praiſed;" the ſpiteful Urchin ſaid,
"The Thief is caught that ſtole our Hen away;
And, pleaſe the pigs, he ſhall the piper pay;
And that right dearly too, if but the nooſe hold:"
Then ſtruck a light and woke up all the Houſehold;
Shouting, "The Fox is caught!" Up roſe they all,
And came down helter-ſkelter, great and ſmall;
Women and Men, in ſhirts, and in chemiſes,
But ill protected 'gainſt the cool night-breezes.
Rouſed from his ſleep, e'en the good Father came;
But threw a mantle round his decent frame;
His Cook with lighted flambeau ran before;
The little Martin a ſtout cudgel bore;
With this, ſoon as the wretched Cat he ſpies out,
He ſtrikes a blow and knocks one of his eyes out.
All fell upon him; with a threepronged fork,
The Prieſt approached and deemed to end the work.
Then Tybalt thought it was his hour to die;
One plunge he made with deſperate energy,
Darting between the Rev'rend Paſtor's thighs,
He ſcratched and bit with wild demoniac cries,
And fearfully avenged his injured eyes.

The Parſon ſhrieked and fell into a ſwoon;
The Cook beſide him knelt in anguiſh down;
Pitying the ſufferings of the good old Prieſt,
She ſaid, "The Devil damn the vicious Beaſt!"
And wildly did ſhe prattle in her ravings;
She would have loſt far ſooner all her ſavings,
Than this miſhap had chanced; ſhe even ſwore,
That if ſhe had poſſeſſed of gold a ſtore,
In alms ſhe would have freely giv'n it, rather
Than ſuch hurt had been done the worthy Father.
Thus did ſhe wail, and many tears ſhe ſhed:
At length they bore him bleeding to his bed.
In grief ſome paſſed the night, and ſome in chat,
Trying to put together this and that;
And quite forgetting all about the Cat.

But Tybalt, when he found himſelf alone,
Maimed tho' he was, with half his ſenſes gone,
Felt the ſtrong love of life tenacious yet,
And from that ſtubborn nooſe reſolved to get.
He ſeized it in his teeth and gnawed amain,
And with ſucceſs, for the cord brake in twain;
And he was looſe. How happy then was he,
If ſuch a woful Wretch could happy be.

Out at the hole he crept, where he ſprang in,
And fled the ſpot, where he'd ſo outraged been.
He haſtened on his road, in ſhame and ſorrow,
Towards the Court, and reached it on the morrow.
And bitterly did he himſelf upbraid:
" Me! to be ſo completely gulled!" he ſaid;
" How ſhall I ever ſhow my face for ſhame,
All batter'd as I am, half blind, and lame?
The very Sparrows in the hedge will cry out,
'There you go, Maſter Tybalt, with your eye out!'"
Who ſhall deſcribe the wrath King Noble felt,
When at his feet the injured Tybalt knelt?
He ſwore the Traitor vile ſhould die the death:
His Council in all haſte he ſummoneth:
The Lords Spiritual and Temporal
Aſſembled in obedience to his call;
And the King ſaid—He wiſhed it to be known
He would maintain the honor of His Crown;
That is, ſo it were done conſiſtently
With the true principles of liberty:
But ſomething muſt at once be done to ſtem
Rebellion; and He left it all to them.—
Judgment, 'twas moved, againſt the Fox ſhould
paſs, he

Being doomed at once to death for contumacy.

The Badger, ſeeing what a ſtorm was brewing,
How all conſpired to work his Kinſman's ruin,
Thus ſpake; "My Liege, it boots not to deny
Theſe charges preſs on Reynard grievouſly;
But Juſtice follows one eternal plan:
Remember, Sire, the Fox is a free Man;
The Law in ſuch a caſe is moſt preciſe
Requiring that he ſhould be ſummoned thrice:
If then he fail, there is nought more to ſay;
But Law and Juſtice both muſt have their way."

"Ha!" ſaid the Monarch ſternly, "ſay you ſo?
Where ſhall be found the Meſſenger to go?
Who hath an eye too many? who will ſtake
His life and limbs for this bad Traitor's ſake?
'Gainſt Reynard's cunning who will wage his wit?
I doubt if any one will venture it."

The Badger anſwered, "*I* will venture, Sire;
And undertake the taſk, if You deſire;
Happen what may. Whether 'tis better, I
A ſummons bear ſtraight from Your Majeſty;
Or of my own accord appear to go:
Whichever You think beſt, that will I do."

"Go then! ſo let it be;" the Monarch ſaid;
"You know what crimes to Reynard's charge are laid;
You know too all his malice; ſo beware,
Your Predeceſſors' fate left you may ſhare."
Greybeard replied, "I truſt I may prevail;
But ſhall have done my duty, if I fail."
Away to Malepartus doth he hie;
Finds Reynard with his Wife and Family;
And greets him; "Save you, Uncle: I can't tell
How charmed I am to ſee you look ſo well.
E'en let your Enemies ſay what they can,
You're a moſt extraordinary Man:
Prudent and wiſe and wary as you are,
Yet the King's wrath ſo ſcornfully to dare.
You'd beſt be warned in time: on every ſide
Are ill reports againſt you multiplied.
Take my advice; with me to Court away,
'Twill help you nothing longer to delay.
You're charged with almoſt every ſort of crime;
You're ſummoned now to-day for the third time,
And ſurely ſentenced if you fail t' appear:
The King will ſtraightway lead his Barons here;

And what can you expect will then befall?
You will be ta'en and hanged: nor is that all:
Your fortreſs razed, your Children and your Wife
Cruelly butchered, or enſlaved for life.
From the King's wrath you cannot hope to flee;
Better then, ſurely, to return with me.
You need not dread to ſtand before your Judges;
You're never at a loſs for cunning dodges:
With your conſummate ſkill and artifice,
You've got thro' many a ſcrape, and will thro' this."

Thus Greybeard ſpake, and Reynard thus replied;

" Your counſel, Nephew, ſhall my conduct guide:
I were to blame, ſhould I your warning ſlight;
I will to Court; and Heav'n defend the right;
The King beſides, I truſt, ſome grace may ſhow;
The uſe I've been to him he well doth know;
That for no other cauſe than this I'm hated,
And, ſave your preſence, like a Badger baited.
The Court would go to pieces but for me;
I don't pretend that from all blame I'm free;
But were I ten times deeper in diſgrace,

Could I but ſee my Sov'reign face to face,
And come to ſpeech with him, I would engage
To ſoothe the tranſports of his Royal rage.
Many 'tis true may at his council ſit;
But many heads have oft but ſcanty wit:
When they get fixed in one of their dead locks,
To whom ſend they for aid, but to the Fox?
No matter how involved the caſe may be,
They find it ſmooth and eaſy, thanks to me.
For this I meet with envy; even thoſe
I moſt befriend turn out my bitt'reſt foes;
But moraliſts agree 'tis not more hateful,
Than it is natural, to be ungrateful.
'Tis this I have to fear; for well I know
My death they have intended long ago.
Ten of the mightieſt Barons in the land
My utter downfal ſeek—a pow'rful band:
Can I alone ſuch odds as theſe withſtand?
'Twas only this kept me from Court, I vow;
But I agree 'twere beſt to go there now.
By far more honorable that will be,
Than bring my deareſt Wife and Family,
By tarrying here, into diſgrace and trouble;

For that would only make the miſchief double.
And of the King I ſtand in wholeſome awe,
His arm is mighty and his will is law.
Mine Enemies perchance by courteſy
I may ſubdue; at leaſt I can but try."
Then to his Wife, who ſtood with weeping eyne,
He turned and ſaid—" My gentle Ermelyne,
Be mindful of our Children; yet I know
You need no hint from me to make you ſo.
Our youngeſt, Greykin, will moſt care require;
He'll be the living image of his Sire,
If theſe convulſions do not ſtop his breathing,
And by Heaven's bleſſing, he ſurvive his teething.
And here's this cunning little raſcal, Ruſſell,
He thro' the world will manage well to buſtle;
His pluck may get him into many a ſcrape,
His craft will ever teach him how to 'ſcape;
I love him well, and have no fear for him;
He'll be a match, I ween, for Iſegrim
And all his Brood. And now, farewell, dear Chuck;
When I return, as, have I any luck,
I ſoon ſhall do, I'll prove me ſenſible
Of all your kindneſs: ſo once more, farewell."

Then from his home with Greybeard he departed;
And ſad he felt in ſpirit and down-hearted;
And ſad too, grieving for her mate and ſick ſon,
Was the leal ſoul of Ermelyne, the Vixen.

Reynard nor Greybeard neither ſilence brake
For near an hour; then thus the former ſpake;

"Ah, Nephew, heavy is my ſoul to-night;
For, truth to ſpeak, I'm in a mortal fright;
My frame with ſtrange forebodings ſhuddereth;
I feel aſſured I go to certain death;
My conſcience ſinks 'neath mine enormities;
You little think how ill I am at eaſe.
Will you, dear Nephew, my confeſſion hear?
There is, alas! no reverend Paſtor near:
Could I but of this load my boſom free
I then ſhould face the King more cheerfully."

"Confeſſion certes benefits the ſoul,"
Quoth Greybeard, "but you muſt confeſs the whole;
All treaſons, felonies and miſdemeanors,
However great—and great, no doubt, have been
yours."

"Yea," anſwered Reynard, "I will nought
conceal;

Lift then, oh, lift, while I my crimes reveal.
Confiteor tibi, Pater—" " Nay! no Latin!"
Quoth Greybeard; " 'tis a tongue I'm nowife pat in.
It would not much avail you to be fhriven,
If I knew not the fins I had forgiven."
" So be it then;" the Fox rejoined; " I ween
A very wicked finner I have been;
And I muft do what penance you enjoin
To fave this miferable foul of mine.
The Otter, and the Dog, and many more,
With many a trick have I tormented fore:
Indeed of living beafts there fcarce is one
To whom I've not fome turn of mifchief done.
Mine Uncle Bruin I beguiled of late;
With honey he prepared his maw to fate;
I fent him back with bloody paws and pate:
And Coufin Tibby, he came here to moufe;
I cozen'd him into a running noofe,
And there, I'm told, an eye he chanced to lofe.
But I muft fay the fault was fomewhat theirs;
They fhould have minded more the King's affairs,
With juftice too complains Sir Chanticleer;
I ate his chicks—and very good they were.

Nay, with unfeigned repentance I muſt own
I have not ſpared the King upon the throne;
And, Heaven forgive me for it! even the Queen
Has not been ſafe from my malicious ſpleen.
But moſt I've outraged Iſegrim, the Wolf;
'Twixt him and me yawns an abyſmal gulf.
Him I've diſgraced in every way I could;
And if I might have done ſo more, I would.
I've even called him Uncle, as a jibe;
For I'm no kin to any of his tribe.

"He came to me about ſix years ago;
I lived then in the cloiſter, down below;
He ſought my help a Monk to get him made;
His fancy was to toll the bells, he ſaid;
He loved the ſound ſo much: ſo with a loop,
I faſtened his fore-feet into the rope:
He was delighted, and began to toll—
'Twas the great bell—with all his heart and ſoul;
But not much credit did his efforts win;
For he kicked up ſuch an infernal din,
Out ruſhed the People when the noiſe they heard,
Thinking ſome dread miſhap muſt have occurr'd.
They came and found my friend the Wolf; and ere

His purpoſe to turn Monk he could declare,
They fell to work, and ſo belabored him,
'Twas all but up with Maſter Iſegrim.
" The Fool was ſtill unſatisfied; ſtill craved
To be a Monk and have his noddle ſhaved;
With a hot iron then I ſinged his poll,
Till the ſwart ſkin all ſhrivell'd on his ſkull.
Ah! many are the blows and thumps and kicks,
That he has been regaled with through my tricks.
I taught him the beſt manner to catch Fiſh;
And he caught juſt as many as I'd wiſh.
" Once, when in partnerſhip we chanced t' en-
We groped our way into a parſonage; [gage,
Well ſtored the larder was of the good Prieſt,
For he was rich and amply benefic'd.
Bacon there was and hams more than enough,
And lots of pork lay ſalting in a trough.
If'grim contrived to ſcratch the ſtone wall through,
And crept in at the hole with much ado,
Urged on by me and his own appetite;
For with long faſting he was rav'nous quite.
I did not follow, as I had ſome doubt
How, if I once got in, I might get out.

Iſegrim gorged till chuck-full to the eyes,
And ſwell'd to nearly twice his former ſize;
So that, although he ſtrove with might and main,
He could not for his life get out again.
'Thou lett'ſt me in,' he cried, 'oh, faithleſs hole!
Empty, and will not let me out when full.'
Away I haſtened; raiſed a loud alarm, [ſwarm.
On the Wolf's track in hopes the Boors might
Into the Parſon's dwelling then I run;
And find him to his dinner ſitting down,—
A fine fat capon juſt brought on the tray,—
This I ſnapped up, and with it ſtole away.
Up roſe the Prieſt in haſte and overthrew
The table, with the food and liquors too;
On every ſide the glaſs and crock'ry flew.
'Kill him!' called out th' enraged Eccleſiaſtic;
'Oh! that the bones in his damn'd gullet may ſtick!'
Then, his feet catching in the cloth, he ſtumbled,
And all among the meſs and fragments tumbled.
But loudly he continued ſtill to bawl:
The hubbub brought the Houſehold, one and all.
Away I ſped, as faſt as I could go;
They after me, with whoop and tally-ho:

The Parſon ſhouting loud as he was able,
‘ The Thief! he’s ſtole my dinner from my table!’
I ne’er, until I reached the pantry, ſtopped;
But there, ah, well-a-day! the fowl I dropped;
I could no longer toil beneath its weight,
But lightened of my load eſcaped by flight.
The Parſon, ſtooping to pick up the fowl,
Spied Maſter If’grim ſtuck faſt in the hole:
‘ Halloo!’ he cried, ‘ halloo! come here, my
friends!
‘ See what a ſcapegoat righteous Heaven ſends!
‘ Here’s a Wolf caught; if he ſhould get away
‘ We were diſgraced for ever and a day.’
The Wolf no doubt wiſh’d he’d ne’er ſeen the
larder;
Meanwhile their blows rained on him, hard and [harder;
And many a grievous thump and kick and thwack
He got upon his ſhoulders, ſides and back;
And all the while, as if the Devil ſtirr’d them,
They yelled and ſcreamed and ſwore—I ſtood and
heard them.
At length it ſeemed all up with Iſegrim;
He ſwooned; and then they left off beating him.

I'd lay a bet he never had before
His hide ſo curried, and will never more.
'Twould make an altar-piece, to paint the way
They made him for the Parſon's victuals pay.
At length out in the ſtreet for dead they threw him;
And over ſhards and pebbles rough they drew him:
Then flung him, as no ſigns of life he ſhow'd,
Into a ſtagnant ditch beſide the road,
And left him buried there in ſlime and mud.
How he recovered 's more than I can tell;
It almoſt ſeems a ſort of miracle.

" Yet after this, about a year, he ſwore
To be my Friend and firm Ally once more:
I cannot ſay his word I quite believed;
I felt that one of us would be deceived.
I ſoon found out his object was to get
A meal of Fowls on which his heart was ſet.
I told him of a rafter, where there uſ'd
A Cock with ſeven fine fat Hens to rooſt.
It was paſt twelve o'clock one cloudy night,
When moon and ſtars gave not one ray of light,
I took him to a houſe I'd known before,
Where was a window on the ſecond floor;

The lattice ſhutter by good luck ſtood ope;
To this along the wall we ſlily crope;
And, being never barren in expedients,
I prayed mine Uncle he would take precedence:
'Go boldly in,' I whiſpered; 'do not fear;
'You never ſaw ſuch Fowls, as you'll find here;
'I'll warrant, you ne'er finer met or plumper;
'I'd lay my life you'll carry off a thumper.'
Cautiouſly in he ſtole, while I ſtayed out;
And here and there he 'gan to grope about:
But before long in tones ſubdued he ſaid,
'Reynard, by all that's Holy, I'm betrayed;
'You've led me, I ſuſpect, a wildgooſe chaſe;
'Of Fowls I find not the remoteſt trace.'
'The foremoſt I've long had,' ſaid I; 'you'll find
'The others juſt a little way behind:
'You'd better make your way acroſs the rafter;
'Don't be afraid; I'll follow cloſely after.'
This rafter now was anything but broad,
And no ways ſuited to ſuſtain a load;
And Iſegrim was fain to uſe his talons
In order any how to keep his balance.
Out at the window I contrived to back,

And then ſlammed to the ſhutter in a crack;
It jarred the rafter, and the Wolf fell plump, ere
He could reſtore himſelf, a monſtrous thumper.
Thus was again my prophecy fulfill'd;
In ſuch prophetic warnings am I ſkill'd.
The Houſecarles, who around the chimney dozed,
Were, by his heavy fall, from ſlumber rouſed;
'What's that fall'n from the window?' cried
they all,
And lit the lamp and ſearched about the hall;
And in a corner found they Iſegrim;
Good Saints in Heav'n! how they did puniſh him!
Yet ſomehow he contrived to get away
With a whole ſkin, but how I cannot ſay.

"I muſt confeſs too, even though it wound
A lady's honor, with Dame Gieremund
I've oftentimes committed mortal ſin:—
It is ſo hard to ſtop when you begin.
This fault with deep contrition I deplore,
And truſt I never may be tempted more.

"Such are my ſins, O Father! if not all,
At leaſt I have confeſſed the principal.
I pray for abſolution, and ſubmit

To whatſoever penance you think fit."
Then Greybeard ſhook his head, looked wiſe
and big;
And from a neighb'ring buſh plucked off a twig.
" My Son," quoth he, " this rod receive; with it
Three times your back in penance muſt you ſmite;
Next, having laid it gently on the ground,
Three times acroſs it muſt you gravely bound;
Laſtly, in humble and obedient mood,
Three times with rev'rence muſt you kiſs the rod.
This done, I pardon and abſolve you quite,
And every other puniſhment remit."
This penance cheerfully by Reynard done,
Greybeard reſumed; " Let your good works, my
Prove the ſincerity of your repentance. [Son,
Read pſalms, and learn by heart each pious ſentence;
Go oft to Church; mind what the Paſtor ſays;
And duly faſt on the appointed days;
Show thoſe, who ſeek, the right path; from your
ſtore
Give willingly and largely to the poor;
And from your heart and ſoul renounce the Devil
And all his works, and ev'ry thought of evil.

So ſhall you come to Grace at laſt." "To do
All this," ſaid Reynard, "ſolemnly I vow."
The ſhrift now ended, tow'rds the Court they bent
Their ſteps,—the Confeſſor and Penitent—
In ſeeming meditation wrapt: their way
Through pleaſant woods and fertile paſtures lay.
On their right hand an ancient cloiſter ſtood,
Where holy Women of religious mood,
Paſſed a pure life in ſocial ſolitude.
Stored was their yard with Cocks and Hens and Chickens,
Who often roamed abroad in ſearch of pickings.
Reynard, when not with weightier matters buſied,
Would pay them frequently a friendly viſit.
And now to Greybeard did he turn and ſay,
"By yonder wall you'll find our ſhorteſt way."
He did not mean exactly what he ſaid;
His Confeſſor towards the wall he led;
While greedily his eyes rolled in his roguiſh head.
One Cock'rell notes he in particular,
Who plump and proud was ſtrutting in the rear:
On him pounced Reynard ſudden from behind,

And made his feathers ſcatter in the wind.
While the Fox licked his diſappointed chaps,
Greybeard, incenſed at ſuch a ſad relapſe,
Exclaimed, " Alas! alas! what have you done?
Is this your penitence, unworthy Son?
Freſh from confeſſion, for a paltry Fowl
Will you ſo peril your unhappy ſoul?"
Said Reynard, " You rebuke me as you ought;
For I have ſinned in truth, tho' but in thought.
Pray for me, deareſt Nephew, pray to Heaven,
With other ſins that this may be forgiven.
Never, oh! never more will I offend."
The cloiſter paſſed, the highway they regain'd:
Their pathway lay acroſs a narrow nook:
The Fox behind caſt many a longing look
Towards thoſe tempting Fowls; it was in vain
He ſtrove his carnal yearnings to reſtrain.
If any one had then ſtruck off his head,
Back to the Fowls it muſt perforce have fled.
Greybeard ſaid ſternly, " Whither doth your eye
Still wander? This is hateful gluttony."
Quoth Reynard, " You quite miſconceive th'
affair;

You ſhould not interrupt me when in pray'r.
Let me conclude my oriſons for thoſe
Whoſe ſouls I've ſent to premature repoſe;
Their bodies to my maw a prey were given:
For thus accompliſhed was the will of Heaven."

Greybeard was ſilent: Reynard did not turn
His head, while yet the Fowls he could diſcern.

They've left the cloiſter now behind them quite;
They near the Court; the Palace is in ſight:
Reynard's bold heart beats faintly in his breaſt;
So grave the charges that againſt him preſt.

REYNARD THE FOX

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

THE TRIAL

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CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

SOON as 'twas known by general report
Reynard was really coming to the Court,
Out they all ruſhed in haſte, both Great
and Small,
Eager to ſee the famous Criminal:
In flocks and herds and droves they thronged to
meet him,
But ſcarce did one with word of welcome greet him.
Reynard cared little though for this; he thought—
Or ſeem'd at leaſt to think—it mattered nought.
With Greybeard on indiff'rent things he talked
As, bold as braſs, along the ſtreet he walked;
He could not, had he been the King's own Son,
Free from all crime, with prouder ſtep have gone:
And ſo before the King and all his Peers
He ſtood, as though he felt nor doubts nor fears.
"Dread Lord and gracious Sov'reign!" thus
ſaid he,

" For ever gracious have You proved to me;—
Therefore I ſtand before You, void of fear,
Sure that my tale with patience you will hear;—
A more devoted Servant to the Crown,
Than I have been, my Liege hath never known;
'Tis this brings me ſuch hoſts of Enemies,
Who ſtrive to work me miſchief in Your eyes;
And bitter reaſon ſhould I have to grieve,
Could You one half their calumnies believe.
But high and juſt and righteous all Your views are;
You hear th' Accuſed, as well as the Accuſer:
Howe'er behind my back they ſlander me,
You know how great is my integrity."

" Silence that lying tongue!" the Monarch cries,
" Nor think to veil your crimes with ſophiſtries.
In one career of vice your life is ſpent;
It calls aloud to Heav'n for puniſhment.
How have you kept the peace that I ordained
Throughout My kingdom's breadth ſhould be maintained?

Yon mourns the Cock, diſconſolate with grief;
His Children ſlain by you, falſe-hearted Thief!
You boaſt of your devotion to the Crown;

Is't by your treatment of My Servants ſhown?
Bruin, by your devices, hath been lamed;
My faithful Tybalt ſo ſeverely maimed,
The Leech doubts if he may his health reſtore—
But I will waſte My words on you no more;
Lo! your Accuſers preſs on every ſide;
All further ſubterfuge ſeems now denied."

"Ah! Sire," rejoined the Fox, "am I to blame
My Uncle Bruin has returned ſo lame?
Or is it my fault he has taſtes ſo funny,
He muſt needs pilfer honeſt People's honey?
What if the Peaſants caught him in the fact,
And, 'ſpite his ſize and ſtrength, he got well whack'd?
I could not help it, nor could ſuccour him;—
In ſooth 'twas lucky he knew how to ſwim.
Then as for Tybalt, when he came to me,
I ſhewed him ev'ry hoſpitality;
Gave him the beſt I had; but not content,
His mind was wholly upon thieving bent:
He ſcorned my larder, and would poke his noſe in
The Parſon's granary to go a mouſing,
In ſpite of all my caution and advice—
It ſeems he has a ſtrange penchant for Mice.

Shall I be punifhed becauſe they were Fools?
Does that comport with Juſtice' ſacred rules?
But You will do Your royal will I know;
And I muſt e'en ſubmit for weal or woe:
Whether I am impriſoned, tortured, martyred,
Burnt or beheaded, or hung, drawn and quartered;
So it muſt be, if ſo it be You liſt;
Your pow'r is great, how can the Weak reſiſt?
Tho' to the State ſmall good my death will bring;
I ſhall at leaſt die loyal to my King."
Up ſpake the Ram then, " Friends, the time is come;
Urge now your plaints, or evermore be dumb!"
Then, all confederate for Reynard's ruin,
Stept Tybalt forth, and Iſegrim, and Bruin;
And other Beaſts came ſwarming by the ſcore,
The thin-ſkinn'd Roebuck and the thick-ſkinn'd Boar,
Neddy the Donkey too, and many more.
Frizzy the Poodle alſo, and the Goat,
The Squirrel, and the Weazel, and the Stoat;
Nor did the Ox or Horſe fail to appear;
And Beaſts of ſavage nature too were there;
The flitting Rabbit, and the nimble Hare.



The Swan, the Stork, the Heron and the Crane;
All thither flew, all eager to complain.
Sibby the Gooſe, with anger hiſſing, came,
And the Duck Quackley, who was ſadly lame;
And Chanticleer, that moſt unhappy Cock,
Whoſe ſorrows might have touched a heart of rock,
With the few Children that to him were left,
Accuſed the Fox of murder and of theft.
In countleſs flocks came ſwarming in the Birds,
The Beaſts in vaſt innumerable herds;
All vehement alike on vengeance bent,
All clam'rous preſs'd for Reynard's puniſhment.
Charge upon charge there followed, thick and faſt,
And each freſh plaint more weighty than the laſt.
Since Noble ſat upon his Father's throne,
Was never yet ſuch a Grand Oyer known;
Indeed ſo num'rous the complainants were,
It ſeemed an Oyer with no Terminer.

Meanwhile the Fox conducted his defence
With moſt conſummate ſkill and impudence;
One time a Witneſs he would browbeat ſo,
That what he ſaid the poor man ſcarce ſhould know;
Or elſe repeat his anſwers in a tone,
Which gave a ſenſe quite diff'rent from his own;

Or interrupt with ſome facetious jeſt,
Or tell a ſtory with ſuch hum'rous zeſt,
That, ſerious things forgotten in the ſport,
They laugh'd the Proſecutor out of Court.
And when he ſpoke, Truth ſeemed to tip his tongue,
Indignant as each charge aſide he flung;
They heard with wonder and diverſion blent,
Almoſt diſpoſed to think him innocent;
Nay, ſome there were who more than half believed
He was himſelf the Party moſt aggrieved.

At length came Witneſſes who ſtood ſo high
For unimpeachable veracity,
That all his crimes and outrages, as clear
As is the ſun at noon, were made appear.
The Council all agreeing, with one breath,
Pronounced him guilty and condemned to death;
Bound, to the gallows he ſhould thence be led,
And hanged there by the neck till he was dead.

And Reynard now gave up the game for loſt;
His ſkill had ſerved him for diſplay at moſt;
And as the King himſelf his doom pronounced,
All hope of mercy he as vain renounced;
For ſeized and pinioned, hopeleſs was his caſe,

With ignominious death before his face.
As there he ſtood, diſgraced, diſconſolate,
His Foes beſtirred themſelves to ſpeed his fate.
His Friends the while in ſilent awe ſtood round;
Great was their trouble, and their pain profound;
Martin the Ape, Greybeard, and many more,
Who to the hapleſs Culprit kindred bore:
The King's will they reſpected as they ought;
But ſorrow'd all—more than one might have thought:
For Reynard was a Peer of high degree,
And now ſtood ſtripped of every dignity;
Adjudged to die a death of infamy.
A ſight indeed to make his Kinſmen grieve!
Then of the King they one and all took leave,
And left the Court, as many as were there;
Reynard's diſgrace they had no mind to ſhare.
The King was ſore chagrined though in his heart,
To ſee ſo many Peers and Knights depart:
It proved the Fox had ſome Adherents ſtill
Too much diſpoſed to take his ſentence ill.
Then turning to his Chancellor, he ſaid,

" Though Reynard's crimes his doom have merited,
'Tis cauſe for anxious thought and deepeſt care,
How we his num'rous friends from Court may
ſpare."
But Bruin, Iſegrim and Tybalt, all
Were buſied round the luckleſs Criminal.
Anxious to execute the King's decree,
They hurried forth their hated Enemy,
And onward haſtened to the fatal tree.

Thus to the Wolf then ſpake the ſpiteful Cat;
" Sir Iſegrim, you've now got tit-for-tat:
You need not be reminded, I'll be ſworn,
Of all the wrongs from Reynard you have borne.
You'll not forget, unleſs your heart's grown callous,
He had your Brother hanged on that ſame gallows,
And taunted him with many a biting ſcoff;
In his own coin you now can pay him off.
Remember too the foul trick you were played,
Sir Bruin, when by Reynard's craft betrayed
To that baſe Joiner and his rabble Crew;
The inſults you received, the beating too;
Beſides the deep and ſcandalous diſgrace
To be the talking-ſtock of every place.

Keep close together then and have a care;
Left he slip off before one is aware:
For if, by any artifice or chance,
He now contrive to 'scape our vigilance
We shall remain eternally disgrac'd,
Nor ever shall the sweets of vengeance taste."

Quoth Isegrim, "What boots it chatt'ring so?
Fetch me a halter without more ado.
A halter, ho! and see that it be strong:
We would not have his suff'ring last too long."

Thus against Reynard did they vent their wrath,
As tow'rds the gibbet they held on their path.
He'd heard all they had said, and not yet spoke;
But now, with sidelong leer, he silence broke;

"If you a halter want, Tybalt's the man
To fit you one upon the newest plan;
He knows how best to make a running noose,
From which one cannot possibly get loose;
He learnt it at the Parson's granary,
Where to catch Mice he went, and lost an eye.
But, Isegrim! and Bruin! why pretend
Such zeal to hasten your poor Uncle's end?
In sooth it does not to your credit tend."

Now roſe the King, with all his Lords, to ſee
Juſtice was done with due ſolemnity;
And, by her courtly Dames accompanied,
The Queen herſelf walked by the Monarch's ſide:
And never was there ſeen a Crowd ſo great
As followed them to witneſs Reynard's fate.

Meanwhile Sir Iſegrim his Friends beſought
To march cloſe packed, and keep a ſharp look out;
For much he feared, leſt by ſome ſhifty wile
The Fox might yet their watchfulneſs beguile:
And ſpecially did he conjure his Wife;
"See that the Wretch eſcape not, on thy life;
If he ſhould this time ſlip from out our pow'r,
We ne'er ſhould know another peaceful hour.
Think of your wrongs;" thus Bruin he addreſs'd;
"And ſee you pay them with full intereſt.
Tybalt can clamber; he the rope ſhall fix;
You hold Sir Reynard tight, and mind his tricks:
I'll raiſe the ladder, and you may depend on't
In a few minutes we ſhall make an end on't."

Quoth Bruin, "Quick! and get the ladder plac'd:
I'll warrant me I'll hold the Ruffian faſt."

"Why ſhould you take," again thus Reynard faith,

" Such pains to expedite your Uncle's death?
You know, the more the haſte the worſe the ſpeed.
Ah! ſad and cruel is my lot indeed!
To meet with hate from ſuch old Friends as you!
I know 'twere vain, or I for grace would ſue.
Stern Iſegrim hath e'en compelled his Wife
Join this unkindly plot againſt my life:
Her memories of the paſt might ſurely wake
Some feelings of compaſſion for my ſake:
But when you can foretell tomorrow's wind,
Then truſt the conſtancy of Womankind.
But if ſo be it muſt; ſo let it be.
The ſooner done, the ſooner I am free.
My fate will but with my poor Father's match;
Albeit, good Soul, he died with more deſpatch.
Neither did ſuch a goodly Company
Attend his death, as now has honor'd me.
You ſeem to fancy, if you ſpared me now
You'd all be ſhamed; and haply, 'twould be ſo."
" Hear him!" cried Bruin; " hear the Ruffian boaſt;
Quick! prithee, quick! let no more time be loſt."
Then Reynard ſeriouſly to think began—

'Could I but now deviſe ſome cunning plan;
That, in this hour of my extremeſt need,
I might be pardoned and from bondage freed;
Eſcape with credit from death's bitter throes,
And heap diſgrace on theſe deteſted Foes.
What can be done? 'tis worth ſome pains to take,
Since nothing leſs than life is here at ſtake.
Slight ſeem the chances for me; ſtrong, againſt;
The King, no doubt, is bitterly incenſ'd;
My Enemies all here; my Friends away;
All my miſdeeds brought to the light of day;—
And, truth to ſpeak, but little good I've done;
Yet ever hoped this evil hour to ſhun.
If they'd but grant me liberty of ſpeech,
Some of their cruel hearts I yet might reach;
And ſo get free of this accurſed rope;
At leaſt I'll try it:—while there's life there's hope.'

Then turning on the ladder where he ſtood,
He thus addreſſed th' aſſembled Multitude:
"My doom is fixed; chance of eſcape is none;
Grant then a dying man one trifling boon:
Before you all, as many as are here,
Ere yet I cloſe my criminal career,

Fain would I freely all my ſins confeſs,
Lamenting that their number is not leſs;
Elſe for ſome crime in ſecret done by me,
The Innocent perchance might puniſhed be:
And thus my ſinful ſoul ſome hope may have
Of mercy on the other ſide the grave."

Many were moved at this and 'gan to ſay;
" Small is the favor, brief is the delay."
And as it ſeemed a reaſonable thing,
They begged it and obtained it of the King.
A load was now removed from Reynard's heart,
And he at once prepared to play his part:
While through the Crowd expectant murmurs ran,
With well feigned penitence he thus began:

" Oh, aid me now, *Spiritus Domini!*
For I am ſentenced and muſt ſhortly die.
Vaſt as this meeting, ſcarce can I ſee one,
To whom I've not ſome grievous inj'ry done.
Whilſt I was ſtill a tiny little Brat,
Scarce weaned, and not much higher than my hat,
I loved to watch the Lambs and Kids at play
When from their watchful Herds they chanced to
ſtray:

It made my boſom throb to hear them bleat,
My bowels yearn too for ſubſtantial meat.
Ere long, in jeſt, I bit to death a Lamb,
Who'd ſtroll'd away ſome diſtance from its Dam;
While yet 'twas warm and freſh, I licked the blood,
And found that it was exquiſitely good.
Four of the youngeſt Kids I next did ſlaughter:
The thought—Heav'n help me!—makes my
mouth yet water.
Grown bolder, I indulged each wild caprice;
My tooth ſpared neither Fowls nor Ducks nor Geeſe;
I caught and ate them whereſoever found,
And ſome, half-eaten, buried in the ground.

"One winter, on the Rhine, it chanced I met
If'grim,—a meeting I may well regret.
He claimed direct relationſhip with me,
Showed we were Couſins, and in what degree.
Guileleſs myſelf, I readily believed;
Perhaps too ready to be ſo deceived.
Ourſelves we bound then in a ſolemn league;
Force ſhould be uſed by him; by me, intrigue;
Eternal friendſhip each to each we ſwore,
Ah! little did I ween what fruit his friendſhip bore.

" The provinces we traverſed, one and all;
He the large booty ſtealing; I, the ſmall.
Our bargain was, we ſhould divide all fair;
But what he choſe to leave was all my ſhare;
Nor was this all th' injuſtice I muſt bear.
If e'er he chanced a Goat or Sheep to ſteal,
And I came up, and found him at his meal;
Or caught him gorging a freſh-ſlaughtered Calf,
Of which he'd not devoured more than half;
He'd grin his teeth at me, and ſwear and curſe;
I was e'en glad that matters were no worſe.
And thus it was he always treated me,
However large the booty chanced to be.
In hunting, if we ever caught, by luck,
Some head of noble game, as Hind, or Buck,
Or Ox, or Cow, whoſe carcaſe vaſt was more
Than e'en his gluttony could all devour;
His Wife and Children ſtraight made their appear-
ance,
And in a trice there was a total clearance;
Not e'en a ſpare rib fell unto my ſhare,
But what was gnawed and poliſhed, clean and bare:
And thus was I for ever forced to fare.

But Heav'n be thanked I never ſuffered hunger;
I'd means to live on, twenty years or longer;
A treaſure vaſt of ſilver and of gold,
Securely hidden in a ſecret hold.
More than a ſingle waggon, I might ſay
Even at ſeven loadings, could convey."
Noble, the King, heard all that Reynard ſaid,
And bending forward now his Royal head;
" Say then, where did you get it from?" he cried,
" I mean the treaſure." And the Fox replied,
" It boots me nought to keep my ſecret now;
I cannot take my wealth to where I go.
All, as Your Grace commands me, will I tell;
From fear or favor nought will I conceal.
Stol'n was the treaſure; I'll not tell a lie:
Th' occaſion though the theft ſhall juſtify.
" There was a plot, a moſt atrocious thing!
Even to murder You, my Lord and King;
And then to ſeize upon the vacant Throne:
Beyond all doubt the deed would have been done,
If but ſecure that treaſure had been left;
Your life, my Liege, depended on that theft.
It helped indeed to lay my Father low,

Perchance involved his ſoul in endleſs woe:
But private intereſts, however dear,
With public duties muſt not interfere."

The Queen had heard this lengthy rigmarole
With moſt extreme bewilderment of ſoul,
Alternating between alarm and pleaſure;
Her Huſband's murder, heaps of glitt'ring treaſure,
And widow's weeds, and bridal garments white,
In wild confuſion danced before her ſight.

"Reynard," ſhe cried, "your hour is almoſt come;
Before you lies the road to your long home;
Nought but true penitence can ſave your ſoul;
Tell nothing but the truth, and tell the whole."

Then ſpake the King, "Be ſilent, ev'ry one!
Let Reynard from the gallows-tree come down;
And let him,—but ſtill bound,—approach mine ear,
'Tis fit that this ſtrange hiſt'ry I ſhould hear."

With cheerful hopes buoyed up the Fox deſcends,
While grieved his Foes were, and rejoiced his Friends;

Approached, as he was bid, the King and Queen;
Who longed to know what might this myſt'ry mean.
His web of lies he ſtraight prepared to ſpin;
'If the King's grace,' he thought, 'I could but win,
And, by ſome cunning trick of policy,
Could ruin thoſe who ſeek to ruin me,
From peril then ſhould I be wholly freed.
Ah! that would be a maſter ſtroke indeed!
'Tis a bold caſt: if I would proſper in't,
'Twill need the uſe of falſehood without ſtint.'
The Queen impatient queſtioned him again:
"The whole proceeding, Reynard, now explain;
Speak truth, and eaſe your conſcience and your ſoul."
"Truly," ſaid Reynard, "will I tell the whole.
Am I not doomed, too juſtly doomed, to die?
No chance there is to 'ſcape my deſtiny.
My ſoul to burden more at ſuch a time
Were but to add a folly to my crime.
Better to ſpeak the truth at any rate,
Though Friends and Kinſmen I may implicate.
There is no help for it, I know right well;

Before mine eyes I have the pains of Hell."
And the King's heart with gloom was overſpread;
" And ſpeak'ſt thou nought but ſober truth?" he
ſaid.
Reynard replied with ſanctimonious mien,
" A miſerable Sinner have I been;
And oft have lied to ſerve mine intereſt;
But ſurely now the truth ſhall aid me beſt:
Falſely to make a dying declaration
Would be to court eternal condemnation.
Yourſelf, my Liege, have doomed that I muſt die;
With my laſt words I dare not breathe a lie."
While thus did Reynard, vile Diſſembler, ſpeak,
Remorſe and terror ſeemed to blanch his cheek.
And the Queen ſaid, " His anguiſh moves my ruth:
Encourage him, dear Lord, to ſpeak the truth;
And hear his ſtory calmly to the end:
Our ſafety may upon his tale depend.
Give your commands that no one ſilence break,
And let him publicly his ſtatement make."
At the King's bidding not a ſound was heard;
And Reynard ſpake, " Pleaſe you, my gracious
Lord,

Receive with favor what I have to ſay;
Though note nor minute have I here to day,
The whole conſpiracy will I lay bare,
And no one, be he Friend or Foe, will ſpare."

REYNARD THE FOX

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

THE PARDON

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

NOW hear what lying tales the Fox dared
ſtate,
To ſcreen himſelf and others inculpate;
To what baſe falſehoods utterance he gave,
Slandered his very Father in the grave,
Traduced the Badger too, his ſtaunchеſt Friend;
He thought all means were ſanctioned by the end;
So he could but get credit for his lies,
And have revenge upon his Enemies.

Thus he began: "It chanced that once my Sire,
Whoſe wit and wiſdom ſtill the World admire,
Diſcovered, hid in an obſcure retreat,
The treaſures of King Emmerick the Great;
It ſeemed a Godſend, but it brought ſuch evil,
'Twas much more likely ſent him from the Devil.
With his new fortune he waxed haught and proud;
For his old Comrades deemed himſelf too good;

Fancied that by aſſiſtance of his pelf
To higher circles he might raiſe himſelf;
Conceived ideas the moſt abſurd and vain,
And hatched the ſtrangeſt maggots in his brain.
He ſent off Tybalt to Ardennes' wild regions
For Bruin, tend'ring him his ſworn allegiance;
Inviting him to Flanders to repair,
And promiſing to make him King when there.
Bruin with vaſt delight his letter read,
Without delay to Flanders off he ſped;
Him did my Sire exultingly receive;
And planned how their deſigns they might achieve.
They got to join them in the enterpriſe,
If'grim the ſavage, and Greybeard the wiſe.
Theſe four in the conſpiracy combin'd;
Four perſons truly, though but one in mind;
While Tybalt joined their counſels for a fifth:
They journeyed onwards till they came to Ifth;
A little village is there of that name,
Obſcure it is and all unknown to Fame;
'Twixt this and Ghent, in a ſequeſtered ſpot,
They met together to arrange their plot.
Over the meeting, which murk night did hide,

The Devil and my Father did preſide;
One o'er their minds with falſe hopes kept his hold,
One, with the influence of his dirty gold.
Regardleſs of all loyalty and faith,
They compaſſed and imagined the King's death;
The five then ſwore on If'grim's curſed head,
Bruin the Bear ſhould reign in Noble's ſtead;
And at Aix-la-Chapelle, upon the throne,
Should bind his temples with the golden crown.
If any one their trait'rous ſcheme withſtood,
Bound to the King by fealty or blood,
Him ſhould my Sire with words or bribes perſuade,
Or, failing theſe, call force in to his aid.
I learnt the buſ'neſs in the ſtrangeſt way;
The Badger had been drinking hard one day,
Th' uxorious blockhead, though it riſked his life,
Told the whole ſecret to his wheedling Wife;
He bound her though to ſolemn ſecrecy,
And the Fool fancied that he ſafe would be.
But what are woman's vows? His Wife and mine
Goſſips had been together from lang ſyne;
And when they met, the former, as with child
Of her grand ſecret, nodded, ſmirked and ſmil'd;

And having made my Wife firſt ſwear an oath,
By the three Kings, and by her faith and troth,
Never to breathe one word to mortal ſoul,
Relieved her lab'ring boſom of the whole.
My Wife was horror-ſtruck, and ſtraightway ſhe
Felt it her duty to tell all to me;
Of courſe; for Moraliſts have all one mind,
That inofficious vows can never bind.
I ſaw at once—what man of ſenſe would not?—
The wickedneſs and folly of the plot:
All living Beaſts had gone unto the Dogs,—
And fared, as formerly thoſe ſtupid Frogs;
Who with their ceaſeleſs croakings worried Heaven,
To change the King who firſt to them was given;
His tranquil reign inglorious they deemed;
They long'd for greater freedom, as it ſeemed;
Then o'er them to preſide Heav'n ſent the Stork;
Like a Legitimate he ſet to work;
All who oppoſed he baniſhed from the State,
Decreed their lands and chattels confiſcate;
And while he thus enrich'd himſelf, he ſwore
'Twas all to benefit the Church and Poor;
While love for law and order he profeſſed,

Freedom in ſpeech and action were repreſſed;
And none were heard, or ſuffered, to repine;
Thus did he prove he ruled by Right Divine.
The poor Fools curſed their ſelf-invited fate,
And wiſhed the old King back; but 'twas too late."

Thus ſpake the Fox; and lied at ev'ry word,
That all who heard him wondered as they heard.
" The State," he thus proceeded, " had been loſt;
But 'twas Your ſafety, Sire, concerned me moſt:
The riſks I ran to ſave You were immenſe,
And merited ſome better recompenſe.
Bruin's fell mind I knew; his temper curſt,
His love of cruelty forebode the worſt;
Our lives, if he had chanced to get the ſway,
Had not been worth the purchaſe of a day.
Our preſent King enjoys a diff'rent fame;
Noble alike by nature and by name.
A ſad and ſtupid change indeed it were—
A royal Lion for a clowniſh Bear!
Thus with myſelf I oft communed in thought;
And means to ward this evil daily fought.

" One thing was certain; if my Sire retain'd
This vaſt amount of wealth at his command,

Hoſts of Allies together he might bring,
Would win his game, while we ſhould loſe our King.
And now my chiefeſt ſtudy was to trace
This ſecret treaſure to its hiding place;
Then bear it ſafe away, if ſo I might;
Of this I dreamed by day and ſchemed by night.
Wherever now the crafty Old-one went,
Through field or foreſt where his ſteps he bent,
Whether in cold, or heat, or wet, or dry,
Cloſe on his track inceſſantly was I.
" But Chance at length, or rather, Heaven's high will,
Procured me what I could not gain by ſkill.
Concealed behind a buſh, one ſummer's day,
Chewing the cud of bitter thought, I lay;
Grinding all ſorts of plans within my pate,
This treaſure to ſecure, and ſave the State:
When from a fiſſure in the rocks hard by,
I ſaw my Father creep out ſtealthily;
With expectation breathleſs I lay hid:
While, cautious, he looked round on ev'ry ſide;
Thought himſelf ſafe, perceiving no one near,
And then began his games, as you ſhall hear.

The hole with ſand he filled, and all around
He levelled ſkilfully th' adjacent ground;
Nor was this all; before he left the place,
All marks of footſteps he contrived t' efface:
Bent to the earth, he ſwiſhed his tail about,
And ſmoothed it o'er with his elaſtic ſnout.
Ah! truly was my Sire a wond'rous Man!
The wide World now may match him, if it can!
How many quips and cranks and wanton wiles
I learnt from him, moſt cunning of old Files!
" But to proceed. He quickly left the ſpot;
' Here then the treaſure is concealed,' I thought.
I haſtened to the rocks with eager ſoul,
Soon ſcratched away the ſand and cleared the hole,
And down into the cleft with caution ſtole.
Good Heav'ns! what precious things there met
my ſight!
What maſſes of red gold and ſilver white!
The oldeſt preſent here, I'm bold to ſay,
Ne'er ſaw ſuch ſtores as I beheld that day.
My Wife I brought the glorious ſight to ſee;
To move the treaſure hourly laboured we;
And ſooth, it was a work of toil and pain;

We'd nought to help us,—neither cart nor wain.
My good Wife held out bravely to the laſt,
Till we in ſafety had the treaſure plac'd.

" Meanwhile my Sire conſulted day by day,
With thoſe who fought our Sov'reign to betray.
For dread and horror now your ſouls prepare,
Their machinations baſe whilſt I lay bare.
By Iſegrim and Bruin briefs were ſent,
To raiſe Recruits and ſtir up diſcontent;
All were allured in Bruin's hoſt to ſerve;
Whom lucre might from duty tempt to ſwerve.
And that the call they ſooner might obey,
They were aſſured a month's advance of pay.
Theſe briefs my Father round the country bore;
He deemed in ſafety he had left his ſtore;
Though if withall his friends he'd ſearched for ever,
He ne'er had found a ſolitary ſtiver.
No pains he ſpared to further the deſign;
Sought ev'ry ſpot between the Elbe and Rhine,
And many Converts to the cauſe he made;—
Who largely promiſes may ſoon perſuade.

" Atlength the ſummertide once more was come;
With it returned my weary Father home;

Of troubles and miſhaps he'd much to tell,
Of many hair-breadth ſcapes by field and fell;
How for his life he had been forced to flee,
Among the towered heights of Saxony;
Where wicked Hunters chaſed him out of ſpite,
With horſe and hound, from morn till ſtarry night;
That ſcarce he ſaved his ſkin by rapid flight.
With joy then to his Comrades he diſplay'd
The long liſt of Adherents he had made.
Bruin was charmed, and, with the other four,
Studied th' important writing o'er and o'er.
Twelve hundred Souls of If'grim's ſavage Clan,
Had pledged themſelves to join him to a man,
With ſharp and hungry teeth and open jaws,
They promiſed to ſupport King Bruin's cauſe.
The Cats and Bears enrolled without a bribe;
And all the Glutton, all the Badger tribe;
But, leſs devoted, or more cautious, they
Had bargained for the month's advance of pay.
All theſe and many more had ſworn t' attend,
At the firſt ſummons which the Bear ſhould ſend.
By me this plot was foiled: but thanks be given
Not unto me for this; but unto Heaven!

" My Sire now haſtened to the cave once more;
Eager to tell his cheriſhed treaſure o'er:
But, though the firmeſt faith poſſeſſed his mind,
The more he ſought the more he did not find.
Vain were his labors, his regrets as vain,
Doomed never to behold his wealth again.
Three days diſconſolate he roamed the wood,
Shunning his mates, and never taſting food;
The fourth—ſad day for me! although his Heir—
He hanged himſelf from grief and ſheer deſpair.
" Thus have I done, thus ſuffered, good my Lord,
To countervail a plot my ſoul abhorr'd.
Though for my pains this ſtrange return I get,
The ſteps I took I never can regret.
If grim and Bruin ſit at Your right hand,
Doomed as a Traitor the poor Fox muſt ſtand;
But yet this thought ſhall conſolation bring;
I loſt my Father, but I ſaved my King.
The ill I've done be buried in my grave,
My name this one good deed from infamy ſhall
ſave."
He ceaſed: a murmur ran through all the crowd;
But what all thought, none dared to ſpeak aloud.

The King and Queen both felt a ſtrong deſire
This wondrous ſtore of treaſure to acquire;
They call'd the Fox aſide and bade him ſay
In what place he had ſtowed it all away.

Though Reynard found it hard his joy to hide,
Still in deſponding accents he replied;
"Why ſhould I tell this ſecret to my Lord,
Who dooms my death and ever doubts my word?
In Traitors he prefers his truſt to place,
Whoſe triumph is achieved in my diſgrace."

"Nay," ſaid the Queen, impatient; "nay, not ſo!
His vengeance juſt my Lord may yet forego,
The paſt he may forgive, may e'en forget;
And you may live a life of credit yet;
Could he but have ſome certain pledge, that you
Would for the future loyal prove and true."

"Ah gracious Queen!" the wily Fox replies,
"Let me find favor in King Noble's eyes;
Through your mild influence let me pardoned be,
And hence depart in life and member free;
Amply will I atone for all my crimes;
Nor King nor Kaiſer lives of modern times
Can truly boaſt one half the wealth to own,

Which I will lay before my Sov'reign's throne."
" Believe him not!" the angry Monarch cries;
" Whoſe lips ne'er open but to utter lies.
If he would teach you how to cheat or thieve,
His words you then might readily believe."
And the Queen ſaid—" Let not my Lord be wroth:
Though Reynard's life ill augurs for his truth;
Yet ſurely this time hath he ſpoken ſooth.
His Father and his Uncle hath he not
Shown to have ſhared in that accurſed plot?
He might have ſure deviſed ſome ſtratagem,
While blaming others, to exon'rate them.
And if he do ſpeak truth, how great a prize
We loſe, if now with him his ſecret dies."
Awhile the Monarch pauſed, immerſed in thought,
In his ſoul's depths as though he counſel ſought.
Then anſwered—" If you think 'twere better ſo,
Nor deem that ill from ſuch a courſe may flow,
I may purſue the bent of my own mind,
To mercy more than vengeance ſtill inclin'd.
The Culprit I will pardon, and reſtore,



As a new man, to all he held before.
This time I truſt him—let him though take heed—
This time I truſt him, for the laſt indeed;
For by my Father's crown I make a vow,
If with falſe tidings he deceive me now,
On all who claim his kin, where'er they be,
My wrath ſhall fall, e'en to the tenth degree,
In torture ſhall they periſh utterly."

Seeing the King ſo eaſily was ſway'd,
Reynard took heart and ſpake out undiſmay'd:
" To lie now were moſt criminal, no doubt;
When I ſhould be ſo ſpeedily found out."

Thus the ſly Knave the Royal pardon won,
Both for his Father's treaſons and his own.
Freed from the gallows and his Enemies,
Great was his joy nor leſs was their ſurpriſe.

" Nobleſt of Kings!" he cried, " and beſt of Lords!
My gratitude is all too vaſt for words.
But the warm thanks of this poor heart are given
To You, and your auguſt Spouſe, next to Heaven.
My life You ſpare; my wealth is but Your due;
For life, and wealth belong alike to You.

The favors heaped on my unworthy ſelf
Far, far outweigh all thoughts of paltry pelf.
To You as a free gift I now make o'er
The whole of good King Emmerick's mighty ſtore.
Then liſten, Sire, while I its hiding place
By certain ſigns enable You to trace.

" Now mark me! Far in Flanders, to the eaſt,
There lies a wild inhoſpitable waſte;
There grows a ſingle copſe named Huſterlow,
Near it the waters of a fountain flow,
Call'd Krekelburn; theſe names remember well;
Why they're ſo call'd is more than I can tell.
It is a ſavage and romantic ſcene,
Where foot of Beaſt hath ne'er or rarely been;
There dwell alone the Owl, the Bat, the Jay;
And there it was I ſtow'd my wealth away.
Remember, Sire, cloſe each to each they lie,
The copſe, and the ſpring Krekelburn hard by.
Yourſelf and Royal Spouſe had beſt go there,
It were not ſafe to ſend a Meſſenger;
'Twere far too great a riſk to truſt a Stranger;
And with the trueſt Friend not much leſs danger.
Now further mark my words: at Krekelburn

Sharp to the left you take a ſudden turn;
A ſtone's throw off two birches ſhall you ſee,
Their penſile branches drooping gracefully.
Directly up to theſe then muſt you go;
There delve forthwith; the treaſure lies below.
At firſt but moſs you'll find about the roots,
But ſoon your toil will meet with richer fruits;
Heaps of red gold you'll find; in ingots part,—
Part fabricated by the Goldſmith's art;
Among it will be ſeen King Emmerick's crown,
Which ſilly Bruin hoped to call his own;
And many a coſtly chain and jewel rare,
Far more than I can reckon up, are there.
Then, gracious Sire! when all this wealth You ſee,
Will You not think with kindneſs on poor Me?
'That honeſt Fox!' methinks I hear You ſay,
'With ſo much ſkill to ſtore his wealth away!
'My bleſſing be upon him day and night!'"
Thus Reynard ſpake, the wily Hypocrite.
And the King anſwered: "You muſt with me go,
Or ne'er ſhall I find out this Huſterlow?
Of Lubeck and Cologne I've oft heard tell,

Of Paris alſo and Aix-la-Chapelle;
But never yet of Huſterlow before,
Or Krekelburn, until this very hour.
How may I know that this is not again
A pure invention of your ſubtle brain?"
Sadly perplexed and daunted ſore to find
Suſpicion haunting ſtill the Royal mind;
"Ah, Sire!" exclaimed the Fox, "'tis all the ſame
To hang a Dog as give him a bad name!
A trip through Flanders ſure is no ſuch burden!
'Tis not a pilgrimage beyond the Jordan!
It is enough to drive one to deſpair,
To find one's word ſo doubted every where!
Haply there may be ſome one here in Court
Who may avouch the truth of my report."
He looked around and call'd the Hare,—who
came—
A timid terror trembling through his frame,
"Come hither, Maſter Puſs!" the Fox began;
"Hold up your head, and look, Sir, like a man!
The King deſires to learn if aught you know
Of either Krekelburn or Huſterlow:
Speak truly now, on your allegiance oath."

And the Hare anſwered—" Sire! I know them
both.
Far off in Flanders in the waſte they lie,
Huſterlow firſt, and Krekelburn cloſe by:
Huſterlow is the name they give a copſe,
Where crookback Simon had his working ſhops;
He coined falſe money; that was years ago.
It is a dreary ſpot, as well I know;
From cold and hunger there I've ſuffered much,
When flying from the cruel Beagles' clutch."
Quoth Reynard then; "Enough! you may retire.
I truſt I now have ſatisfied you, Sire!"
And the King ſaid to Reynard; "Be content:
My doubts were not to wound your feelings meant."
(He thought indeed by what the Hare had ſtated
The Fox's tale was quite corroborated.
And thus it is that many a man of ſenſe
Will deal with the effect of evidence.)
"But you muſt with us go; for much I doubt
That elſe I ne'er ſhall find the treaſure out."
"Dread Sire!" rejoined the Fox; "to go with You
Would be a ſource of pride and pleaſure too!
But, ſooth to ſpeak, my company would be

A cauſe of ſorrow to Your Majeſty.
I hoped to 'ſcape expoſure of this evil;
But I muſt ſpeak the truth and ſhame the Devil.
" How Iſegrim turned Monk, Sire, you have heard;
'Twas more to ſerve his belly, than the Lord.
Soon were his Brethren weary of his tricks;
Almoſt ſtarved out; he ate enough for ſix;
And caring nothing for his wretched ſoul,
For fleſh on faſt-days would he rave and howl.
At laſt, one afternoon, about Mid-Lent,
He ſent for me, and ſtraight to him I went:
And I muſt needs confeſs that I was ſtagger'd
To ſee him look ſo ſadly gaunt and haggard.
He thus entreated me, with tearful eyes,
By all our loves, by all our kindred ties;
' Get me ſome food, or I ſhall die of famine!
' Sweet Coz, you ſee the wretched plight I am in.'
My heart was ſoftened; for he is my kin;
And in my weakneſs I committed ſin:
To the next town I hied and ſtole ſome meat;
Placed it before the Wolf, and he did eat.
But for my goodneſs ill was I repaid,

By this vile Judas treach'rouſly betray'd.
And I, for this offence, more heinous than
All my paſt crimes, lie 'neath the Church's ban.
But now I have eſcaped my threatened doom,
I thought, with Your kind leave, to wend to Rome;
By penitence and alms I there might hope
To purchaſe abſolution of the Pope;
Thence, having kiſſed his Holineſs's toe,
I purpoſed to Jeruſalem to go;
With cockle hat and ſtaff and ſandal ſhoon;
Why ſhould a Fox not take a Palmer's tone?
Returned, from all ſins purged, I might with pride
Then take my place, Sire, at Your honored ſide.
But if perchance I ventured this today
Would not the pious Scandal-mongers ſay;
' Lo! how the King ſeeks Reynard's company,
' Whom he ſo lately had condemned to die;
' And he ſtill excommunicated too!'
But judge You, Sire, what may be beſt to do."
"Heav'ns!" cried the King, "how ſhould I know
all this?
It were a ſin to keep you here, I wis;
The Hare, or ſome one elſe, can ſhow the way:

You have Our leave to go without delay.
For worlds I'd not your pilgrimage prevent;
Since I believe you truly penitent.
May Heaven, which alone your heart can read,
Profper your purpofe and your journey fpeed!"

REYNARD THE FOX

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

THE RELAPSE

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

THUS Reynard gained once more his Sov-
'reign's grace:
Who ſlowly mounting up to his high
place,
Prepared t' addreſs the meeting from his throne;
Bade them be ſilent all, and all ſit down,
After their rank, ranged on the verdant ſward;
On either hand drew up the Royal Guard;
At the Queen's ſide th' undaunted Reynard ſtood;
And thus the Monarch ſpake in thoughtful mood:
"Be ſtill and liſten, all ye Beaſts and Birds,
Both ſmall and great, hear and attend Our words!
Here, in Our mercy, ſee where Reynard ſtands,
Late doomed to ſuffer by the Hangman's hands.
But now for certain reaſons, grave and high,
Touching Ourſelf, Our crown and dignity,
And, at the interceſſion of Our Queen,

Reſtored to grace and favor hath he been;
And free We here pronounce him, from this date,
In life and limb, in perſon and eſtate.
In Our protection him and his We take,
Deſiring they be honored, for Our ſake:
And furthermore, it is Our Royal will,
Henceforth of him none dare to utter ill;
Convinced, as We his former faults forgive,
In future he a better life will live.
Tomorrow will he leave his hearth and home
And ſtart upon a pilgrimage for Rome;
Thence will he make, as he doth now aver,
A journey to the Holy Sepulchre;
And then return, his ſins confeſſed and ſhriven,
Completely reconciled to Us and Heaven."

He ceaſed. The Cat, in anger and deſpair,
Sought out his dear Allies, the Wolf and Bear:
"Our labor's loſt;" he cried, "ah! well-a-day
The very Devil is there here to pay!
From this curſt place would I were ſafe away!
If Reynard once get power, be ſure that he
His fierce revenge will wreak on all us three.
Of my right eye already am I reft;

Alas! the other will not long be left."

"Woe's me! what ſhall we do?" exclaimed the Bear.

"Let us," ſaid If'grim, "to the Throne repair!
Sure 'tis the ſtrangeſt thing that e'er was ſeen!"
Forthwith they knelt before the King and Queen:
For juſtice loud they ſpoke, or rather ſtammered;
For juſtice, inarticulately clamored.

But angrily the King brokeforth:—"My Lords!
Either you did not hear, or mark my words.
It is my pleaſure Reynard to forgive;
It is a branch of my prerogative;
For is it not to every Schoolboy known,
Mercy's the brighteſt jewel of the Crown?"

His mighty wrath had now to fury riſen;
He bade them both be ſeized and caſt in priſon;
Deeming they ſtill might plot, if left at large,
The treaſons, laid by Reynard to their charge.

The Fox was now well paid for all his pains;
Himſelf in favor, and his Foes in chains:
Nay more—he from the King contrived to win
The grant of a ſquare-foot of Bruin's ſkin;
He vowed—and never could enough extol it,—

It was the very thing to make a wallet.
Thus was he for his pilgrim-journey ſuited;
But liking not to make it quite bare-footed,
He ſued the Queen; "May't pleaſe your Majeſty,
Your own devoted Pilgrim now am I;
The road I have to go is rough and long,
And I in health am any thing but ſtrong;
It greatly would protect my tender toes,
Saving your preſence, if I had ſome ſhoes.
Now Iſegrim the Wolf hath got two pair;
Stout-built and ſtrong; and one he well may ſpare;
It cannot incommode him much to loſe them,
Since he has no occaſion now to uſe them.
Speak for me, gracious Madam, to the King,
He will not ſure deny ſo ſmall a thing.
Dame Gieremund, too, cannot be averſe
To let me have the loan of two of hers;
As ſhe'll not ſee her Lord ſome time to come,
Like a good Houſewife, ſhe will ſtay at home."
The Queen replied, ſhe thought it was but fair
That each of them ſhould let him have a pair:
And Reynard thanked her with his beſt of bows,
Saying; " I promiſe, if I get the ſhoes,

Your Majeſty ſhall have my daily pray'rs,
That Heaven preſerve you free from fretting cares;
Beſides, what holy relics back I bring,
You ſhall be ſure to ſhare them with the King."
He had his wiſh: from Iſegrim's fore paws
Two ſhoes they ſtripped him off, both ſkin and claws;
And Gieremund, his next to widowed Dame,
As to her hinder feet, they ſerved the ſame.
Now while the Wolf and Bear together lie
In priſon and in pain, and wiſh to die;
With ſhoes and wallet fitted out, the Fox
Draws near to Gieremund, whom thus he mocks;
"Look, beſt and deareſt one, theſe ſhoes, you ſee
Fit juſt as though they had been made for me!
Though you have wiſhed me ill in days bygone,
Such well timed kindneſs can for all atone.
Who would have thought, a few ſhort hours ago,
To ſee me honored and accoutred ſo?
But Fortune's wheel is ever on the move;
And what is now depreſſed ſoon mounts above.
Act on this maxim, and you baffle Fate;
Hope, when in trouble; fear, when fortunate.
Whene'er to Rome I get, or croſs the ſea,

My heart untravelled with my Friends will be;
And you the largeſt portion ſhall obtain
Of thoſe Indulgences I hope to gain."
Poor Gieremund meanwhile in torture lay,
And ſcarce could muſter ſtrength enough to ſay;
" This hour is thine, and we muſt needs ſubmit;
But there may come a day of reck'ning yet."
Thus Iſegrim and Bruin both remained
Wounded, diſgraced, impriſoned and enchained;
And Reynard's triumph ſeemed complete to be;—
Although he grieved that Tybalt ſtill was free.
When morning came, the Hypocrite aroſe,
And firſt he greaſed, and then he donned his ſhoes;
Next to the Royal levee haſtening,
To make his congé, thus addreſſed the King;
" Your Servant, Sire, your notice would engage
Ere he ſets out on his long pilgrimage.
Sad is my lot: the Church's ban hangs o'er me,
A dreary, dang'rous journey lies before me:
'Twould give me hope, and confidence of heart
To have your Chaplain's bleſſing ere I ſtart;
Succeſs would then my onward ſteps attend,
And bring my travels to a happy end."

Now Noble's private Chaplain was the Ram;
A gentle Brute, and Bellyn was his name;
The King, who of his ſervices was chary,
Employed him alſo as his Secretary.
Him now he bade come forth and thus addreſs'd;
" Speak over Reynard,—'tis his own requeſt,—
Some holy words, his deep remorſe t' aſſuage,
And cheer him on his lonely pilgrimage;
He goes, you know, to Rome; then o'er the ſea;
And by your bleſſing ſanctified would be;
Then, having hung his wallet by his ſide,
Give him a Palmer's ſtaff his ſteps to guide."

And Bellyn anſwered thus; " My gracious Lord,
What Reynard has avowed you ſurely heard;
He owns he ſtill is excommunicate;
And truly I lament his wretched ſtate;
But ſhould I do the thing you now require,
I might incur my worthy Biſhop's ire;
The matter eaſily might reach his ear;
And he could puniſh me, and would, I fear.
To Reynard, certes, I wiſh nothing ill;
And gladly would perform my Sov'reign's will;
For this, all things in reaſon would I venture,

Could I be ſure to 'ſcape my Biſhop's cenſure:
But the good Prelate is an awful Man,
And ſuch a ſtrict Diſciplinarian;
Beſides, there are th' Archdeacon and the Dean"—
The King no longer could contain his ſpleen,—
"What," he exclaimed, "boots all this idle prate?
I aſked for deeds, not words, Sir Woolypate."
And then he ſwore, and loudly, at the Ram,
Saying, "Are you aware, Sir, who I am?
Nor Prieſt nor Pope ſhall in my realm have ſway;
I look My Subjects ſhall their King obey.
And whether you wiſh Reynard well or ill
Can have no influence on My Royal will.
It is My pleaſure he ſhould go to Rome;
May be 'tis yours he ſhould remain at home."

Aſtounded by the Monarch's ſtern reproof,
The poor Ram trembled to his very hoof;
And ſtraight he took his book and 'gan to read
A bleſſing over Reynard's ſinful head;
But little did that Wretch attend to it,
Or little care about the benefit.

The bleſſing o'er, they bring his ſcrip and ſtaff;
How in his ſleeve doth the falſe Pilgrim laugh;

While down his cheeks diſſembling tear-drops
courſe,
As though his heart were melting with remorſe.
And in good ſooth he did feel ſome regret,
That Tybalt was not in his power yet:
He wiſhed to cage him with the other Three,
Whom he had brought to ſuch extremity.
He begged them all, and chiefly Iſegrim,
That they would pardon and would pray for him;
Then, with ſome fear ſtill ling'ring at his heart,
Leſt he might be detained, prepared to ſtart.
And Noble, King of Beaſts, much edified
To ſee ſuch ſymptoms of repentance, cried;
" Say, my good Reynard, prithee, why ſuch haſte?
Some few hours with your Friends you ſure may
waſte."
" Nay, my kind Lord," ſaid that falſe-hearted
Loon,
" A good work ne'er can be commenced too ſoon.
Diſmiſs me, Sire; th' important hour is come,
Big with the fate that Reynard leads to Rome."
The Monarch, taken in by Reynard's art,
Gave him his gracious licenſe to depart;

And bade th' aſſembled Barons of his Court
The Pilgrim a ſhort diſtance to eſcort.
The Wolf and Bear 'ſcaped this humiliation;
And from their fetters forged ſome conſolation.
To the King's favor quite reſtored again,
Reynard ſets forth with all that lordly train,
Upon his pious journey to be ſhriven,—
Much the ſame road that Lawyers go to Heaven;—
Pleaſed to have brought the King to ſuch a paſs,
Led by the noſe as eaſy as an Aſs.
Honored was he and waited on by thoſe
Who even now had been his bitter Foes.
Nor could he yet let his old tricks alone;
But turning back he knelt before the Throne,
Kiſſed the King's hand, and cried;—" Ah, deareſt
Lord!
Vouchſafe to let me ſpeak one parting word:
Remember what great int'reſts are at ſtake,
And of thoſe Traitors an example make:
Some acts of mercy Reaſon will condemn;
Your People ſuffer, if You pardon them."
And then with downcaſt look away he went,
And all the bearing of a Penitent.

The King broke up his Court without delay;
Then to his royal palace took his way:
And thoſe who, to their ſhame, and Reynard's pride,
His progreſs had ſome way accompanied,
Now took their leave and haſtened to depart.
Meanwhile the Rogue ſo well had plied his art,
Inſiſting on the bleſſings of repentance,
He'd ſoftened not a few of his Attendants;
And ſpecially the tender-hearted Hare
From ſympathetic tears could not forbear.
Him now the cunning Fox accoſted thus;
" And muſt we part indeed, dear Couſin Puſs?
If you and Bellyn could perſuaded be
A little further yet to go with me,
'Twould be an act of kindneſs on your part,
And comfort much my poor afflicted heart.
How greatly to my credit 'twill redound
If I in ſuch ſociety am found;
Pleaſant Companions are ye both, I ken,
And, what's far better, honeſt, gentle men;
Ne'er doing wrong, you others' wrongs forgive,
And, as I lately did, you always live,
Of graſs and herbs and leaves you make your food,

And never ſoil your guiltleſs teeth with blood;
Hence are your conſciences ſerene and quiet;—
Such Good reſults from vegetable diet."
And thus into the ſnare he laid they fell:
A little flattery ſometimes does well.
To Malepartus, journeying on, they came;
When thus the wily Fox addreſſed the ſilly Ram;
" Dear Bellyn, will you tarry here a little?
You muſt, by this time, ſurely want ſome victual;
And hereabouts you'll find enough to eat;
The herbage is particularly ſweet,
In fact we rather of our paſtures vaunt;—
I'll juſt take Puſſy in to ſee his Aunt;—
Poor Soul! ſhe ſits alone diſconſolate,
And mourning over my unhappy fate;
And when ſhe hears that I to Rome muſt go,
'Twill cauſe her quite an ecſtacy of woe.
Puſſy, I know, for his dear Uncle's ſake,
Will to his Aunt the ſad news gently break."
And thus, to carry out his own vile ends,
The Fox contrived to ſeparate the Friends.
Puſs entered with him; when—omen of ill!
His footſteps ſtumbled on the very ſill;

But Reynard ſmiled, and they paſſed onward, where
His vixen Wife and cubby Children were.
How Ermelyne rejoiced to ſee her Lord
In ſafety to her longing arms reſtored!
She'd ſuffered much anxiety and pain,
Left by his wrathful Foes he ſhould be ſlain,
Or a cloſe priſ'ner for his life remain.
And ſeeing him decked out with ſcrip and ſtaff,
She ſcarce knew whether firſt to cry or laugh,
So great her joy and wonder: thus ſhe ſpoke;
"Reynie, my Love; my heart had almoſt broke;
How glad I am you're come! Where *have* you been?
And what *does* all this maſquerading mean?"

And thus the Fox replied—"Ah, deareſt Wife!
But narrowly have I eſcaped with life:
My Foes were powerful, and I was weak;
I had the halter round my very neck;
But our good King, with that peculiar ſenſe
That marks all Sov'reigns, ſaw my innocence;
And, as a teſtimonial to my worth,
In pious Palmer's weeds has ſent me forth;
My character without the ſlighteſt ſtain;
The Wolf and Bear as Hoſtages remain;

And maſter Puſs, you ſee, has by the King
Been giv'n to me as a peace-offering:
For the King ſaid—' Reynard, you ſee that Hare,
' Yon trembling Coward, who ſtands crouching there;
' That is the Wretch by whom you've been betray'd.'
And for his treaſon he ſhall now be paid."
Puſs heard theſe threat'ning words with mortal fear;
They ſeemed to ring a death-knell in his ear;
Confuſed and ſcared he ſtrove in haſte to fly,
But Reynard darted on him viciouſly,
And clutched him by the throat; Puſs ſhrieked amain
" Help, Bellyn, help!" he cried, and cried again,
" Help! or by this falſe Pilgrim I am ſlain."
But long he did not cry: for Reynard's teeth
Soon cut his windpipe, and let out his breath.
Thus did this curſed and incarnate Fiend
Betray and murder his too-truſting Friend.
" Come now," he ſaid, " to ſupper let us haſte;
Our Friend is fat and delicate to taſte;
The Simpleton was ne'er of uſe before;

To make him ſo long time ago I ſwore.
He wiſhed to wound, but was afraid to ſtrike;
So periſh every one who does the like!"
Then the whole Family ſat down to ſup;
The Hare was ſkinned and ſhared and eaten up:
The Vixen greatly the repaſt enjoyed,
And oft exclaimed, as with the bones ſhe toyed;
" Heaven bleſs the King and Queen! how good
they are,
To cater for us ſuch delicious fare."
" For this time," ſaid the Fox, " it may ſuffice;
I hope ere long a nobler ſacrifice;
That I may let the whole world plainly ſee,
None injures Reynard with impunity."
Quoth Ermelyne—" Dear Lord, I prithee tell,
How you have got away ſo ſafe and well."
" 'Twould take," ſaid he, " full many a weary
hour,
To ſhow how I eſcaped the Law's grim pow'r;
T' explain the tricks, I played my Enemies,
And how I dammed—with duſt—King Noble's eyes.
In ſooth the bonds that now our hearts unite,
Though we are ſworn as Lieges, are but ſlight;

And when the truth ſhall break upon his mind,
Within no bounds his rage will be confin'd.
Me if again within his power he hold
No wealth can ſave of ſilver or of gold;
No chance of mercy left, my fate will be
To hang like fruit, upon the gallows tree.
" Let us, dear Love, at once to Swabia fly;
Unknown by all, perdue we there may lie;
A ſafe aſylum we are ſure to find,
And heaps of provender of every kind;
Fowls, geeſe, hares, rabbits; butter, cheeſe and cream;
Birds in the air and fiſhes in the ſtream.
There far from faithleſs Friends and furious Foes
Our life will ebb in leiſure and repoſe;
In charity with all we'll paſs our days,
And bring our Children up in Virtue's ways.
" For, deareſt Chuck, to ſpeak without diſguiſe,
I've told a moſt infernal pack of lies:
A tale I forged about King Emmerick's ſtore;
And that 'twas hid at Krekelburn I ſwore.
If they go thither, as they will no doubt,
They ſoon muſt find the whole deception out;

And when 'tis all diſcovered, you may form
Some faint idea of how the King will ſtorm,
How he will ſwear; what vengeance he will vow;
And ſure I feel that what he ſwears, he'll do.
You may ſuppoſe what fibs I told, dear Wife;
Ne'er was I ſo put to it in my life:
Again to lie were not the ſlighteſt uſe,
And therefore would admit of no excuſe.

" But happen now what may, one thing is plain;
Nothing ſhall tempt me back to Court again:
Not for the wide world's wealth, from north to
ſouth,
I'd thruſt my head into the Lion's mouth."

Him anſwered thus the ſorrowing Ermelyne;
" And why ſhould we be Outcaſts, Huſband mine?
Why ſhould we leave our comfortable home,
Abroad, like Rogues and Vagabonds, to roam?
Here known by all, by all reſpected too,
Your Friends are faithful and your Vaſſals true;
And certainties againſt uncertainties
To change, is neither provident nor wiſe.
Againſt our will we cannot hence be torn;
Our ſtrong-hold here might laugh a ſiege to ſcorn.

Let the King hither come with all his Hoſt:
He'll have his journey for his pains at moſt.
Of our eſcape I entertain no doubt;
So many ways we have of getting out.
The King is ſtrong and we are weak; but yet
We to his pow'r can well oppoſe our wit.
For this I have no fears: but for your vow
To undertake a pilgrimage juſt now,
That chills my heart with icy fears I own:
What can I do, left friendleſs and alone?"

To her thus Reynard; "Sweet, you have prevailed;
'Twas but a moment that my courage failed:
His threats are idle, and my fears are vain;
Shadows avaunt! Reynard's himſelf again!
As for my vow—better to be forſworn,
Than live the wretched finger-mark of ſcorn:
Vows, when compulſory, bind not the leaſt;
I've heard that doctrine taught by many a Prieſt:
For my part, it may to the devil go;—
I ſpeak not of the doctrine, but my vow.

"So be it as you wiſh. I ſtay at home;
For what on earth have I to do at Rome?

And for my promiſed journey to Jeruſalem,
I only named the project to bamboozle 'em
Nor if, inſtead of the one oath I ſwore,
I'd ſworn a dozen, would I go the more.
With you and my dear Children will I ſtay,
And get out of my ſcrape as beſt I may.
And though the King ſhould have me in his clutch,
Perchance it may not help him over-much;
I may ſucceed, as I have done ere now,
To fit a Fool's cap on his Royal brow:
At leaſt I'll try: the vow I freely make,
I dare be ſworn, I think, I ſhall not break."

Bellyn meanwhile had all impatient grown;
Had ate his fill, and wanted to be gone;
" Puſs! are you ready? It is getting late."
Thus he calls out at Malepartus' gate;
And ſoftly at the firſt, then louder knocks:
When to the door proceeds the wily Fox,
And ſays—" You muſt excuſe our couſin Puſs;
You can return; he'll paſs the night with us."

" Methought," replied the Ram, " I heard him cry,
' Help! Bellyn, help! oh, help me or I die!'

I truſt no ill could here my Coz befall."
" I thought," ſaid Reynard, " you'd have heard
him call;
For in good ſooth he made a mighty din;
I'll tell you how it happened—juſt ſtep in."
But Bellyn's heart was not quite free from fear;
So he ſaid, " Thank ye; I am better here."
Then wily Reynard anſwered; " Very well!
You ſhall hear how the accident befell.
I had juſt told my wife about my vow—
My promiſed pilgrimage to Rome, you know—
When ſhe, alas! good ſoul, was ſo caſt down,
That with the ſhock ſhe fell into a ſwoon.
Our ſimple Friend, alarmed, began to cry,
'Help! Bellyn, help!—help, or my Aunt will die.'"
" Certes," ſaid Bellyn, " he did loudly call."
" He did," quoth Reynard. " Now I've told you all.
As for my inj'ring him;" the Falſe One ſaid;
" I could not hurt a hair of that dear head.
I would be torn to pieces, limb by limb,
Sooner than even think of harming him.
And now," quoth he, " to buſ'neſs. Yeſterday,
The King deſired me, as I came away,

That I, by letter, ſhould communicate
My thoughts on certain grave affairs of State.
This letter, with ſome other papers too,
I beg you'll carry back to Court with you.
I've giv'n the King ſome excellent advice,
Which, though I ſay it, is beyond all price.
While Puſs was reſting from his weary jaunt,
And talking old times over with his Aunt,
I juſt contrived a ſpare half hour to ſnatch,
And have drawn up a maſterly deſpatch."

" I would with pleaſure all your letters take;"
Said Bellyn, " but I fear the ſeals might break;
And I a ſerious cenſure ſhould expect,
Having no pouch the papers to protect."

" That's true, dear Nephew;" anſwered Rey-
nard, pat,
" But we can very ſoon get over that:
The wallet that they made of Bruin's ſkin,
Will be the very thing to put them in;
'Tis ſtrong and thick, and will the wet repel;
I've one within will ſuit me juſt as well;
And doubt not that your labor will be vain;
Some favor from the King, you'll ſure obtain."

The ſilly Ram believed all Reynard ſaid;
Then back into his houſe the Sly One ſped,
And in his wallet crammed the poor Hare's head;
Next having thought how he might beſt prevent
The Ram from finding out what 'twas he ſent;
Unto the door returning, thus he ſpake;
" Here, Nephew, hang this wallet round your neck.
In its contents I truſt you will not pry;
'Twould prove a fatal curioſity.
The knots in a peculiar way are done,
Which only to the King and me are known;
A mode that I invariably uſe,
Whenever I tranſmit important news;
If the King ſees the faſtenings all right,
The Meſſenger finds favor in his ſight.
" Nay if a greater merit you deſire;
And to preferment in the church aſpire;
You have my fulleſt leave to tell the King,
The letters were of your imagining;
That though the handy-work by me was done,
The whole idea was yours, and yours alone;
So ſhall your mental powers be highly rated,
And you, no doubt, be duly elevated.



REYNARD THE FOX

You'll riſe to any ſtation, that you wiſh, up;
Be made a prebend or—who knows?—a biſhop."
Who then ſo happy as that ſilly Ram?
He friſked and gamboled like a very lamb;
And joyfully he cried; "Now do I ſee
The love, dear Uncle, that you bear to me.
What credit will not this adventure bring!
How ſhall I be reſpected by the King!
That I ſuch clever letters ſhould indite—
I, who was ne'er conſidered over bright!
And all this pleaſure and this honor too,
I've none to thank for, Uncle dear, but you.
No longer will I tarry. Let me ſee:—
You're ſure that Puſs will not go back with me?"
"Nay," anſwered Reynard, "that's impoſſible:
For, truth to ſpeak, he's juſt now far from well;
A cold he's got has ſettled in his head;
He's had his gruel and is gone to bed:
His Aunt it is, this treatment doth adviſe;
She's greatly ſkilled in all ſuch remedies.
He'll follow ſpeedily; nay, I would ſwear
He'll be at court as ſoon as you are there."
"Farewell, then!" ſaid the Ram, "no time
I'll waſte;

Farewell!" And off he ſtarted in great haſte:
Travelled all night, the roads not being heavy,
And juſt arrived in time for the King's levée.

When the King ſaw him with the wallet on,
He motioned him he ſhould approach the Throne,
Then ſaid, while he held out his hand to kiſs,
"Bellyn, you're welcome back; but what means this?
Is not that Reynard's wallet that you bear?
Methinks that I ſhould know it any where.
I truſt you left him ſafe and well in health;
I would not have him harmed for thrice his wealth."

And Bellyn ſaid; "Deſpatches, Sire, I bring
From Reynard greeting to my Lord the King;
To get them all complete we both combin'd;
And what he executed, I deſign'd.
For though the handy-work by him was done,
The whole idea was mine, and mine alone.
He tied the knots in a peculiar way,
Which you would underſtand, he bade me ſay."

The King, perplexed, ſtraight for the Beaver ſent,
He was a man for learning eminent;
Could read off-hand, and ſeldom ſtopped to ſpell;
Knew foreign tongues—and his own pretty well;

He acted for the King as Notary;
To read deſpatches oft employed was he;
Vaſt was his ſcience; Caſtor was his name;
And at the Royal bidding now he came.
And Tybalt was commanded to aſſiſt,
The faſtnings of the wallet to untwiſt.
The ſtrings untied, the pouch was op'd; when lo!
A ſight of dread and agonizing woe!
Forth Caſtor drew the poor Hare's mangled head;
" This call you a deſpatch, forſooth?" he ſaid;
" I own it fairly puzzles my poor brains;
Heav'n only knows, for I don't, what it means."
Both King and Queen were ſtartled and diſtreſs'd;
And Noble's head ſunk down upon his breaſt;
The only words he ſaid diſtinctly were—
" Oh! Reynard! Reynard! would I had you here!"
Then long a ſtern and ſolemn ſilence kept;
Till, by degrees, along the circle crept
Th' aſtounding tidings that the King had wept.
At length his grief found utt'rance, and he ſpoke,
While his ſtrong frame like to a Woman's ſhook;—
" He has deceived me;—Me! his King and Lord!

How could I truſt the perjured Traitor's word?
Oh! day of ſhame! where ſhall I hide my head?
Diſgraced! diſhonored! would that I were dead!"
He ſeemed quite frantic; and the Courtly Crew
Felt it their duty to ſeem frantic too.
But Leopardus, near the throne who ſtood,—
A Prince he was, and of the Royal blood—
Thus ſpake; "My gracious Liege, I cannot ſee
Why You and our good Queen thus grieved ſhould
Baniſh ſuch gloomy feelings, and take heart; [be.
Deſpair was never yet a Monarch's part.
As You, Sire, who ſo prudent? who ſo ſtrong?
Remember too, a King can do no wrong."
"Alas!" cried Noble, "it is even ſo;
And this it is adds ſharpneſs to my woe.
'Tis not alone that I have been deceiv'd;
For that, I might have well in private griev'd;
But that the Wretch, to gain his wicked ends,
Has cauſed me do injuſtice to my Friends;—
Bruin and If'grim, who in priſon lie,
The Victims of his curſed villany.
Is't not enough my ſoul to overwhelm,
That the two nobleſt Barons of my realm

Should be ſo puniſhed, and for no offence,
But my blind truſt in Reynard's evidence.
Alas! 'twas in an evil hour, I ween,
I heeded the perſuaſions of the Queen;
She, in ſimplicity a very child,
By his falſe tongue was eaſily beguil'd,
And for his pardon did ſo warmly pray—
I ſhould have been more firm—but I gave way.
Idle is all regret; advice too late;
For even Kings muſt ſometimes bow to Fate."
The Leopard anſwered, "Sire, though you know beſt,
Haply I may a uſeful hint ſuggeſt.
Some comfort to the Wolf and Bear 'twould bring
To have the Ram as a peace-offering:
You heard him boldly, as a boaſt, declare,
'Twas he that counſelled killing the poor Hare.
Thus ſhall you deal him forth a righteous fate,
And thus the injured Peers propitiate.
Then will we hunt the Fox through all the land,
And kill him,—if we catch him,—out of hand;
For if he get but liberty of ſpeech,
The very Devil will he over-reach.

In fine until that crafty Brute is ſlain,
No reſpite from our griefs ſhall we obtain."
He ceaſed; and Noble, King of Beaſts, replies;
" Your counſel pleaſes me, as juſt and wiſe.
Haſten and ſet th' impriſoned Barons free;
In honor ſhall they take their ſtate near me.
Be all the Council ſummoned: they ſhall learn
How foully that baſe Traitor is forſworn;
How he and Bellyn killed the gentle Hare;
How he traduced the loyal Wolf and Bear:
And, as you counſel, Bellyn and his Heirs
For ever I make o'er to them and theirs."
Then Leopardus went without delay
To where the Wolf and Bear in priſon lay.
Straight from their bonds by his commands releaſed,
In ſoothing words the Twain he thus addreſſed.
" Hail, Noble Lords! good tidings, lo, I bring!
Full pardon and free conduct from the King!
By law, you both have been condemned of treaſon;
And law is the perfection of all reaſon;
But ſince 'tis proved you're free of all offence,
You're freely pardoned, for your innocence.
And likewiſe in ſome meaſure to atone

For all the ſuff'rings you have undergone,
Bellyn and all his Tribe, the King declares,
Are given up to you and to your Heirs:
In grove or green whene'er you chance to meet them,
You have full privilege to kill and eat them.
Further, the King will lend his royal aid
To puniſh him by whom you've been betray'd;
The Fox and all his Kindred, to a man,
You've leave to take and torture, if you can.
Theſe rights, which unto you the King doth yield,
Will all by his Succeſſors be upheld;
And, in return, you from your ſouls will caſt
All painful recollections of the paſt;
Raiſed to your old eſtate, afreſh will ſwear
Loyal allegiance to the King to bear."

They took the pardon at the proffered price,
Bellyn the Simple fell a ſacrifice:
And all his Kindred ſuffered too with him,
Victims to the fierce Clan of Iſegrim.
Eternal war was entered on that day;
The Wolves thenceforward made all Sheep their prey;
Hunting and worrying them by day and night;

They had the power, and therefore had the right.
The Monarch further ſolace yet imparts
To Iſegrim's and Bruin's wounded hearts,
By ordering a twelve-days' feſtival,
At which his Barons ſhould be preſent all;
That ſo his Lieges might diſtinctly ſee
Thoſe the King loved, ſhould duly honored be.

REYNARD THE FOX

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

THE OUTLAWRY

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

THE Court was for the feſtival prepared;
And all who came, the banquet freely
ſhared;
By day and night ſucceeded endleſs feaſts;
Was never ſuch a gathering of Beaſts;
All to do homage to the Wolf and Bear,
Who in their preſent joy forgot paſt care.
Nor did the Gueſts do nought but feed like Brutes;
The ſcene was varied with refined purſuits;
The charms of muſic lent their ſoothing aid;
The big drums thundered and the trumpets bray'd;
The dance enlivened the convivial hall,
The courtly minuet and the common brawl;
While day by day the ſports afreſh begin,
And day by day new Gueſts come trooping in.
To name them all would too much time engroſs;
There came the erudite Rhinoceros:

Thick-ſkinned himſelf, he flayed the thin-ſkinned tribe,
A ſavage Critic, though himſelf a Scribe;
In all the goſſip verſed of former times,
He faſhioned hiſt'ry into nurſ'ry rhymes;
Or, told in proſe, made it ſeem all a ſham,
By cooking up his facts *à l' épigramme*.
Next the Hyæna, the good Biſhop, came,
His reſtleſs zeal for ever in a flame;
With his devices the whole kingdom rang,
So mixed they were of piety and ſlang:
No Blood-hound e'er ſo quick a ſcent as he
To track the tainted Sons of hereſy;
Not Gaul by Roman, nor by Spartan, Helot,
Were uſed as they were by the reverend Prelate:
Them with his pen he mangled ſore; and would
Have had them burnt by inches, if he could.
He came; but not in over-cheerful mood,
For at this time his thoughts could nought but brood
On that accurſed and deadly ſchiſm which taught
That *in*, and not *by*, baptiſm Grace was caught.
There was Sir Nibble too, the long-haired Rat;
Haggard and grim and ſworn Foe to the Cat;

Though he at one time, unleſs Rumor lied,
Had wiſhed to 'liſt himſelf on Tybalt's ſide;
Hoped all paſt differences to efface,
And in his favor to obtain a place.
But when he found his fawning flatt'ry ſpurned,
His ſembled friendſhip into hate was turned;
Where once he ſlavered, now he ſpat his ſpite,
And ſhewed his rodent teeth and ſtrove to bite;
But Tybalt thought it prudent to determine
To bide his time till he might cruſh the Vermin.

There too was Jocko ſeen, the long-armed Ape,
Who was in mind ungainly as in ſhape;
Malice and fun in him ſo nicely blent,
When playful moſt, then moſt he miſchief meant;
He chattered nonſenſe with look ſo demure,
Moſt Folks would think—he muſt mean ſomething ſure;
His very talents he would twiſt to ill,
For he could limn and draw with eaſe and ſkill;
But, juſt to prove his power at grimaces,
Caricatured his beſt Friends to their faces.

To count them all, for ages would endure;
But Reynard was not one of them, be ſure.

In watchful idleneſs he lurk'd at home,
That falſe pretended Palmer, bound for Rome.
To viſit Court he was too circumſpect;
He knew what welcome he might there expect.
Safely at home himſelf he might applaud;
But not ſo ſafely could appear abroad.

Meanwhile was held high junketing at Court;
There all was mirth and jollity and ſport;
Feaſting and gambling were there, night and day;
And thoſe who came to ſtuff remained to play.
Full was the royal palace as Noah's ark;
Jouſts were there held, and tourneys, in the park.
From his high place the King ſurveyed the whole
And the vaſt tumult fill'd his mighty ſoul.

'Twas now the eighth day of the feſtival;
The King was ſet at table in his hall,
His Peers around, and by his ſide his Queen;
When lo! the Rabbit ruſhed upon the ſcene!
Bunny the Mild, his face all ſmear'd with blood;
And thus he ſpake, as panting there he ſtood:

"Ah, Sire! ah, hear me! Lords and Gentles all!
Or ſome ſuch fate may ſome of you befall;
What murderous wrongs from Reynard I've re-
ceived;



REYNARD THE FOX

When Reynard saw me, up he [illegible]
[illegible]ting, as I deemed, to come and gree[illegible]

[illegible] William Blake, Jan., 1[illegible]

Too ſcandalous almoſt to be believed!
I paſſed by Malepartus yeſterday;
My road in coming hither led that way;
Dreſſed out in Pilgrim's habits there he ſate,
Seemed to be reading Matins at his gate.
I hurried on, in haſte to reach this Court,
Deeming Your ſummons, Sire, a ſafe eſcort.
When Reynard ſaw me, up he roſe to meet me,
Intending as I deemed, to come and greet me:
When lo! he ſeizes me behind my ears,
And my ſoft ſkin with his ſharp talons tears;
While to the earth with force he preſſed me down;
I verily believ'd my head was gone.
I ſtruggled hard, and, thanks to Heav'n! being light,
Juſt manag'd to get off by ſpeed of flight.
I heard his curſes ſailing down the wind;
But on I ſped and never look'd behind;
And here I am, all mangled as you ſee;
Ah, gracious Lord! have pity on poor me!
If thus from Court we all may be debarr'd,
Of what avail ſhall be the King's ſafe-guard?
Oh! on the common ill in time reflect,
Nor let this Robber's crimes remain uncheck'd."

Scarce had he ended, when the noiſy Crow,
Entering the Court, began his tale of woe;
And thus he ſpake; " Ah, gracious Lord and King!
Moſt melancholy news to You I bring;
For grief and ſorrow ſcarcely can I ſpeak;
For grief and ſorrow ſure my heart will break.
This morn, my Wife and I—my Wife, I ſay;
Alas! my Wife that was but yeſterday!—
In ſearch of food abroad prepared to fly,
Juſt as the dawn lit up the watchet ſky;—
For ſcarce need I your Majeſty inform,
The early Bird picks up the morning worm.—
Croſſing, near Reynard's home, that blaſted heath,
I ſaw a ſight that took away my breath;
Himſelf lay there to all appearance dead;
Stiff were his limbs, his eyes turned in his head;
His tongue protruded from his open jaws;
Awe-ſtruck I called aloud, with ample cauſe;
' Alack!' I cried, ' alack! and well-a-day!
He's dead and'—ſcarcely knew I what to ſay;
Loud did we both in lamentations join,
For my Wife mixed her clamorings with mine.
The body then I cautiouſly approached,

And with my beak the back and belly touched;
While ſhe, poor Soul, perched boldly on his chin,
And, ſtooping down, his mouth ſhe peered within;
Truſting ſome trace of life ſhe might detect;
For little did ſhe ought of ill expect:
But the baſe Wretch ſoon proved he was not dead;
For in a moment off he ſnapped her head!
With horror rooted to the ſpot was I;
And deemed upon the inſtant I ſhould die.
Quick ſtarts he up and makes a daſh at me;
I 'ſcaped, I know not how, into a tree;
Unconſcious terror muſt have winged my flight:
And thence I ſaw, oh heavens! what a ſight!
Sooner alas! would I have loſt my life!
I ſaw the Murderer mangle my dear Wife;
Her tender fleſh I ſaw his talons tear,
The crunching of her bones too could I hear.
So mad with hunger ſeem'd the Cannibal,
That he devoured fleſh, feathers, bones and all!
That hour of anguiſh ne'er will be forgot!
The Wretch now ſatiated left the ſpot;
And I alighted on that curſed ground,
But nothing there ſave drops of gore I found,

And theſe few feathers from my poor Wife's wing,
Which here in Court, to prove my caſe, I bring.

" My tale is ended, Sire! my taſk is done:
I've humbly laid my griefs before the Throne.
From his miſdoings, all the Realm complains
'Tis Reynard rules, and not the King that reigns.
For thoſe who have the pow'r ſuch crimes to ſtem,
And yet repreſs them not, encourage them.
.Forgive me if too bold in what I ſay;
But grief is voluble and will have way."

Now all the Court had heard theſe tales of woe,
Both from the gentle Rabbit and the Crow.
And much incenſed was Noble, King of beaſts,
Who liked not this diſturbance in his feaſts.

Thus then he ſpake in angry tones though ſad;
" Much have I borne with; but this is too bad!
In vain it ſeems that my beheſts are ſpoken;
My laws are outraged and my peace is broken.
This Traitor has deceived me once before;
But never, never ſhall deceive me more!
Nor my fault is't that ſuch a Criminal
Is ſtill at large; the Queen has done it all.
I ſhall not be the laſt, as not the firſt,

By woman's idle counſels to be curſt.
But if this rebel Thief go longer free
The name of juſtice will a mock'ry be.
Take counſel then, my Lords, and do your beſt
To rid our kingdom of this common Peſt."
Pleaſed were the Bear and Wolf this ſpeech to hear;
And thought their hour of vengeance now was near;
But prudently were ſilent, ſeeing both
The King ſo much diſturbed and deeply wroth.
At length the Queen in gentle accents ſpake;
" Do not, dear Lord, your plans too raſhly make;
Calm dignity will beſt aſſert the Right;
Of angry words th' effect is oft but ſlight.
Men oft blame Others their own guilt to hide;
Juſtice demands to hear the other ſide;
Of thoſe who're loudeſt in his abſence, ſome,
If he were preſent, would perchance be dumb.
For Reynard; ſkilful, wiſe and wary ſtill
I knew him, and ſuſpected nought of ill.
All I adviſed was with the beſt intent,
Though the reſult has prov'd ſo different.
From all I ever heard or underſtood,

If bad his deeds, yet his advice was good.
Behoves us to remember in this caſe
His num'rous Followers and powerful Race.
With over-haſte affairs but badly ſpeed;
But what your Royal will ſhall have decreed,
That ſhall your faithful Subjects execute;
And thus ripe counſels yield their proper fruit."
Then ſpake the royal Libbard thus; "My Lord,
Permit me humbly to throw in a word;
I own I think that Reynard ſhould be heard.
With eaſe You can Your objects carry out,
When he comes hither, as he will, no doubt.
I think this is the general view; I mean,
We all would take the ſame view as the Queen."
Then Iſegrim ſpake out; "Forgive me, Prince,
Your words, though wiſe, do not my mind convince.
Put caſe that Reynard now were preſent here,
And from this double charge himſelf could clear;
Yet would I undertake to ſhow good cauſe
His worthleſs life lies forfeit to the laws.
But of ſuch matters better ſilent be

Until we have him ſafe in cuſtody.
Have you forgot the wondrous tale he told
About King Emm'rick's hidden ſtore of gold?
At Huſterlow, near Krekelburn, he ſwore
It would be found, and fifty falſehoods more.
Both me and Bruin hath he brought to ſhame;
And life we hold leſs dear than our good name.
And yet at freedom roams the Rebel ſtill,
And ſteals and murders whom and what he will.
If to the King and Council this ſeem fit,
We, howſoever wronged, muſt needs ſubmit.
Prince Libbard though ſuggeſts he may appear
E'en yet at Court; but why is he not here?
The Royal miſſive bade all Lieges come;
But he, the ſculking Thief! remains at home."

Then ſaid the King of Beaſts; "Why more delay?
Why for the Traitor's coming longer ſtay?
My Royal will is, ye all ready be
On the ſixth day from this to follow me.
Unleſs our pow'r ſhall quite be ſet at nought,
Theſe ills, my Lords, muſt to a cloſe be brought.
Prepare yourſelves at once for battle's din;

Come, armed with ſword and bow and javelin;
Let each right worthily his weapons wield,
So he may merit knighthood on the field.
My Subjects I expect will aid their Liege;
The fortreſs Malepartus we'll beſiege;
And all its myſt'ries into daylight bring."
Then cried they all aloud; "Long live the King!"
Thus were the Monarch and the Peers agreed;
And Reynard's certain doom now ſeemed decreed.
But Greybeard, at the banquet who had been,
In ſecret left the gay and feſtive ſcene.
He haſtened off the wary Fox to find,
And let him know what now was in the wind.
And as alone his weary way he ſped,
Thus to himſelf the grieving Badger ſaid;
"Ah! Uncle dear! how I deplore thy caſe!
Thou prop and ornament of all our Race!
With thee to aid us and to plead our cauſe
We never feared the rigor of the laws."
Thus he arrived at Malepartus' gate,
Where in the open air Sir Reynard ſate.
Two youthful Pigeons he his prey had made,
Who their firſt flight that morning had eſſay'd;

But ill-ſupported by their new-fledged wings,
They fell, and he pounced on the poor weak Things.
Soon as he ſaw the Badger drawing near
He roſe and ſaid; "Ah, welcome, Nephew dear!—
For dear you are to me 'fore all my Kin;—
But what a mortal hurry you ſeem in!
How hot you are! and how you puff and blow!
You bring ſome cheerful news for me, I know."
"Alas!" ſaid Greybeard, panting, "anything
But cheerful, Uncle, are the news I bring.
For all, excepting honor, now is loſt:
Ne'er have I known King Noble ſeem ſo croſt;
Deep hath he vowed a ſhameful death ſhall be
The doom of Reynard and his Family.
He and his Barons bold, a doughty Band,
Armed at all points,—for ſuch is his command,—
With bow and ſword and javelin and ſpear,
On the ſixth day from this will all be here.
Bethink you then in time; for what can you,
'Gainſt ſuch an army, ſingle-handed do?
Bruin and Iſegrim are with the King
Quite reconciled; their will is every thing.
The Wolf of crimes of every ſort and kind

Accuſes you, and ſways the Royal mind.
He has,—as you will but too ſhortly ſee,—
Been raiſed to a Field Marſhal's dignity.
The Crow and Rabbit have been both at Court,
And of your doings made a ſad report.
Should the King this time get you in his pow'r,
Your life's not worth the purchaſe of an hour."

"That all? Your ſtory moves me," quoth the Fox,
"As ſummer breezes do primæval rocks.
As for the King and all his Council too,
I'll warrant me they'll have enough to do;
At leaſt to talk about; becauſe, in fact,
They'll prate and prate for ever, and not act.
About ſuch trifles, Nephew, do not fret;
But juſt ſtep in and ſee what we can get.
You ſee theſe nice young Pigeons I've juſt caught;
They are the beſt of eating, to my thought;
Their bones and fleſh like jellied milk and blood:
So light; and I'm compell'd to take light food;
My Wife too is of the ſame taſte as I;
Come in; ſhe'll welcome you right heartily.
She is not well though, ſo I would not let her
Know why you come; for trifles quite upſet her.

We'll ſtart to-morrow; and I'm nought afraid
But you'll afford me kind and kindred aid."
Quoth Greybeard, "I would die for you with pleaſure."
Quoth Reynard, "You oblige me paſt all meaſure.
And if I live, as well I truſt I may,
Be ſure that I your kindneſs will repay."
"Go," ſaid the other, "go before your Peers,
With that brave honeſt heart, devoid of fears;
At leaſt a hearing you'll obtain from them.
Even Prince Libbard ſays they can't condemn,
Until they've heard all you may have to ſay;
And the Queen thinks preciſely the ſame way.
This hint to your advantage you may guide."
"Be ſure I will;" the crafty Fox replied;
"Howe'er the King may ſtorm; in his deſpight,
I have no doubt to make the matter right;
I know the bait at which he'll ſurely bite."
So into Reynard's dwelling now they went;
The Houſewife welcomed them with kind intent;
The hoſpitable board was quickly ſpread,
And on the Pigeons daintily they fed;
Duly divided each one had his ſhare;

Much were they reliſhed, and was nought to ſpare.
They could, for it was but a ſcanty feaſt,
Have eaten half a dozen more at leaſt.
The meal concluded, they to chat begin;
And the fond Father has the Children in;
And as they climb and cling about his knees,
They waken his parental ſympathies:
"Are they not charming little Rogues?" he ſaid,
"So frolic, yet ſo thoroughly well-bred.
Ruffell is ſuch a Scamp; and his young Brother,
Greykin, will one day prove juſt ſuch another.
Never will they their lineage diſgrace;
Their principles do honor to their Race.
One a young ſtraggling Bantam up ſhall pick,
The other pounce upon a Guinea-chick;
Nor do they reſt contented on dry ground,
But plunge for Ducklings in the Parſon's pond.
To hunt I'd ſend them oft'ner, if I durſt;
But care and prudence they muſt ſtudy firſt;
Learn never to be taken unawares,
And to avoid all Hunters, Dogs and ſnares.
And when by habit they expert ſhall grow,
And courage, tempered with due caution, ſhow,

In ſearch of prey then daily ſhall they roam,
And never ſhall we want for food at home.
Slow ſtealthy ſtep, low crouch and ſteadfaſt aim,
Sure ſpring and firm grip; that is Reynard's game;
Thus have we ſtill upheld the credit of our name."

" Ay, Children are in truth great bleſſings Sir;"
Said Greybeard, who was ſtill a Bachelor
" Pledges of holy and of lawful love,
A conſtant joy and ſolace muſt they prove;
Centred in them, the happy Parents ſee
The pleaſures both of Hope and Memory;
And if ſometimes they prove a ſource of trouble,
That makes, no doubt, the latter pleaſure double.
Nor are your joys confined to you alone;
I love your Children as they were my own."

" Suffice it for to-day;" then Reynard ſaid;
We all are ſleepy; let us now to bed."

Then on the floor, ſoft ſtrewn with leaves and hay,
Their weary limbs adown to reſt they lay.
But Reynard could not ſleep for haunting cares,
So grave appeared the poſture of affairs.

He toſſed and tumbled all the livelong night,
With aching eyes he met the morning light.

Then to the Partner of his joys and woes
Thus did he ſpeak, as from his couch he roſe;
"Be not alarmed; to Court I go again
At Greybeard's wiſh; at home you'll ſafe remain.
That no one know where I am gone 'twere beſt;
Be of good cheer and leave to Heav'n the reſt."
"What!" cried Dame Ermelyne, "Again to Court!
Methinks your foes would wiſh no better ſport.
Are you obliged to go? Bethink you well
Of what on your laſt viſit there befell."
"Indeed," quoth Reynard, "it was paſt a jeſt,
I ne'er remember to have been ſo preſt.
But nothing certain is beneath the ſun;
No matter how a thing may be begun,
None can ſay how 'twill finiſh, till 'tis done.
Albeit 'tis needful that to Court I go,—
For I have much that's weighty there to do,—
Be calm, I beg you; there is nought to fear;
A week at furtheſt I'll again be here.
Adieu then, for a time, dear Love;" he cried;
Then off he ſtarts with Greybeard at his ſide.

REYNARD THE FOX

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

THE JOURNEY

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

TOWARDS King Noble's Court, without delay,
Greybeard and Reynard now held on their way.
And the Fox ſaid, " My heart feels quite elate,
This journey will, I know, prove fortunate.
And yet, dear Nephew, ſince I laſt confeſt,
My life has truly not been of the beſt.
Hear what freſh crimes I now have to deplore;—
Some too which I forgot to tell before.

" A good ſtout ſcrip I've had from Bruin's hide:
The Wolf and his good Lady have ſupplied
My tender feet, each with a pair of ſhoes;
'Tis thus I've wreaked my vengeance on my Foes.
The King too, I confeſs, I've badly treated,
And with groſs falſehoods ſcandalouſly cheated.
Further,—for nought will I conceal from you,—

I killed the Hare, and what's more, ate him too:
His mangled head by Bellyn I ſent back,
Truſting the King would ſtretch him on the rack.
The Rabbit too I tried to make my prey;
Although—thank Heav'n for that—he got away.
Th' offence of which the Crow doth now complain
Is not without foundation in the main;
For why ſhould I the ſimple truth diſguiſe?
I did devour his Wife before his eyes.

" Theſe my chief ſins are ſince my laſt confeſſion;
But I omitted then an old tranſgreſſion;
A trick, for which I hope forgiv'n to be,
Againſt the Wolf, mine ancient Enemy.

" One day we happened to be travelling
The road between Kaktyſs and Elverding;
When we a Mare perceived with her young Foal,
The Dam and Daughter each as black as coal;
'Bout four months' old the Filly ſeemed to be;
Said Is'grim, who was nearly ſtarved, to me,
' See, prithee, Nephew, if you can entice
' Yon Mare to ſell her Foal at any price.'
Raſh was the venture, I was well aware;
But up I trotted, and addreſſed the Mare;

‘ Say, deareſt Madam, may I make ſo bold
‘ To aſk if this ſweet Creature’s to be ſold?
‘ If ſo, for it belongs to you I ſee,
‘ I truſt upon the price we may agree.’
Said ſhe; ‘ Yes, if I get the ſum I want,
‘ I’ll ſell her; and ’tis not exorbitant;
‘ You’ll find it written on my near hind hoof.’
I gueſſed her meaning and kept well aloof.
‘ Alas!’ I cried, as though I nought ſuſpected;
‘ My education has been ſore neglected;
‘ Reading and writing are beyond my pow’r;
‘ My parents have a deal to anſwer for.
‘ Not for myſelf the dear Child I deſire;
‘ It was the Wolf who bad me to inquire.’
‘ He’d better come himſelf;’ replied the Mare;
Quoth I, ‘ I’ll tell him what your wiſhes are.’
So where he waited I joined Iſegrim;
‘ The Foal is to be had,’ ſaid I to him;
‘ The price is written on the Mare’s hind hoof;
‘ She kindly offered me to ſee the proof;
‘ But ’twas no uſe to me, who cannot read;
‘ My life, alas! has ſadly run to ſeed.
‘ But you, dear Uncle, ſoon will make it out;

'Approach and read, for you can read, no doubt.'
Said Iſegrim, 'I rather think I can;
'German, French, Latin, and Italian.
'To ſchool I went at Erfurt, then to college,
'Where I picked up a vaſt amount of knowledge;
'Took duly my degrees and honors too;
'I ſwear I quite forget how much I knew:
'All one learns there is wond'rouſly abſtruſe,
'Though not, perhaps, in practice, of much uſe.
'I'll go and the inſcription read at once,
'To prove that, though a Scholar, I'm no Dunce.'
So off he ſtarted to the Mare, quite bold,
Aſked for how much the Foal was to be ſold;
She gave the anſwer ſhe had giv'n before;
And down he ſtooped the writing to explore.
Her hoof ſhe lifted gently from the graſs;
Freſh ſhod and armed with ſix new nails it was;
And fetched him a full plumper on the head,
That down he tumbled, ſtunned, and lay for dead.
Then off ſhe galloped with her friſky Foal,
And whinnied as ſhe went, for joy of ſoul.
For a good hour the Wolf lay on the ground,
Then 'gan to howl, like any beaten Hound.

I haſtened up to him, and, ‘ Uncle, ſay,’
Quoth I, ‘ what cauſes you lament this way?
‘ Have you your bargain made with Madam Mare?
‘ And eaten up her Foal? that’s not quite fair!
‘ Sure, for my pains, I ſhould have had my ſhare.
‘ And, as you are ſo learned, prithee do
‘ Expound to me the writing on the ſhoe?’
‘ Ah me! I am derided!’ he made moan;
‘ My ſuff’rings though might melt a heart of ſtone.
‘ Never before did I ſo badly fare.
‘ Oh! may the Devil fetch that long-legged Mare!
‘ Six bleeding wounds I have in my poor head.
‘ The only wonder is I am not dead.’
“ Thus I’ve confeſſed, as far as I am able,
And made my conſcience clean and comfortable.
Now that is done, I truſt to hear from you
Some ghoſtly counſel what is next to do.”
Him Greybeard anſwered thus; “ ’Tis true indeed
Of ghoſtly counſel you ſtand ſore in need;
For from your tone I gather that, as yet,
Your crimes you rather boaſt of, than regret.
’Tis true, regret for paſt miſdeeds is vain;

It cannot bring the Dead to life again.
Your ſins I muſt in charity forgive,
Seeing how ſhort a time you have to live;
For certainly the worſt reſults I dread:
You never can get over that Hare's head.
It was in ſooth a moſt audacious thing
To aggravate the anger of the King!
More miſchief to your cauſe thereby you've done
Than in your thoughtleſſneſs you reckon on."

"Nay, not a jot;" replied th' undaunted Rogue;
Self-intereſt will always be in vogue.
Thoſe in the world who live muſt look to rough it,
And meet with many a kick and many a buffet.
He who would beſt get on muſt rant and roiſter,
Nor think to paſs his time as in a cloiſter.
As for the Hare, I own he tempted me;
He ſkipped and ſprang about ſo ſaucily,
And looked ſo plump, that howſoe'er I ſtrove,
My appetite proved ſtronger than my love.
For the Ram's fate I do not care a pin;
His was the ſuff'ring; mine may be the ſin.
'Tis not my worſt miſdeed by many a one;
My penance otherwiſe were quickly done.

To love our Neighbors we are told, 'tis true;
But Moſt do juſt what they ought not to do.
What's done though can't be helped; and, as you
ſaid,
'Tis worſe than uſeleſs to regret the Dead.
Uſeleſs indeed, I think, is all regret;
Save ſome advantage from it one can get.
" Enough of this! we live in awful times!
No Rank or Station ſeems exempt from crimes!
Corruption from the Rich ſpreads to the Poor;
Good men the gen'ral Ill can but deplore;
And though we dare not ſpeak, we think the more.
" The King himſelf will plunder, that we know,
As much as any of his Subjects do;
And, what he does not take himſelf, devolves,
As lawful prey, upon the Bears and Wolves.
To ſpeak the truth dares not a ſingle Soul,
The miſchief may be ne'er ſo great or foul.
The Clergy keep quite ſilent; and no wonder;
They have a decent portion of the plunder.
If of extortion any one complains,
He only has his trouble for his pains.
If ought that you poſſeſs the Great allures,

Then may you ſafely ſay it *has been* yours.
But Few to tales of grievance will attend;
And they are ſure to weary in the end.
Noble, the Lion, is our Lord and King;
He acts as he were Lord of every thing;
He calls us oft his Children; and, 'twould ſeem,
Forſooth that all we have belongs to him.
For let me ſpeak my mind; our gracious King
Loves ever thoſe the moſt, who moſt can bring;
And who will dance as he may chooſe to ſing.
The Many ſuffer, though but Few complain;
The Bear and Wolf are now in pow'r again;
They ſteal and rob and pillage, left and right;
And yet find favor in the Royal ſight.
While each who might have influence is dumb,
Living in hopes that his own time may come.
Let a poor Devil, like myſelf, but take
A paltry Chicken, what a howl they make.
They're all upon his back without remorſe,
And he's condemned to ſuffer, as of courſe.
For thoſe, who crimes commit of deeper dye,
No mercy ſhow to petty larceny.

" Such thoughts, I own, have often croſſed my mind

When to repentance I have felt inclin'd;
And to myſelf I've ſaid, in Reaſon's ſpite,
That what ſo many do muſt ſure be right.
Conſcience indeed within me ſometimes ſtirs,
And ſays, with that peculiar voice of hers;
'Reynard, why ſeek thus to deceive thyſelf?
'No good came ever of unrighteous pelf.'
Then deep remorſe I've felt for doing wrong;
Deep for the moment, but not laſting long.
Becauſe, look round the world which way I would,
I ſaw the Bad fared better than the Good.
Not, as times go, can every one afford
To cheriſh Virtue as its own reward.
"The people too, ſave their mobility,
In all their Betters' ſecrets love to pry;
Their faults they will obſerve and con by rote,
And pick holes e'en in Honor's petitcoat.
"But the worſt feature of this pinchbeck age,
Which, if my ſcorn it mov'd not, would, my rage,
Is, that all ſorts of public men we ſee
Merged in the ſlough of mediocrity,
There will they plunge and wade and flounce and
flounder,

Endeav'ring each to keep the other under;
For if one ſtrive, by merits of his own,
To riſe, his Neighbors pelt and pull him down.
As though 'twere quite agreed that little men
From a dead level had the furtheſt ken;
That by example might the World be ſchooled
With what a ſmall amount of wiſdom it is ruled.

" In private, too, all paltry vices flouriſh;
Men are moroſe and ſelfiſh, ſly and curriſh:
Backbiting, malice, lying and falſe-ſwearing
Have become matters of familiar bearing.
Hypocrites and falſe Prophets ſo abound
That Truth, ſave in a well, can ne'er be found.

" If to remonſtrate with them you ſhould try,
Quickly and coolly will they thus reply;
' The ſins you mention cannot ſerious be,
' Or ſure the Clergy from them would be free.'
Thus, following thoſe of a ſuperior ſtation,
The People ſin, like Apes, by imitation.
Thinking and acting much as Monkeys do,
They often get the ſame allowance too.

" Truly the Prieſthood better ſhould behave;
With common care, their credit they might ſave.

But it quite marvellous appears to me
The flight in which they hold the Laity.
Before our very eyes they do not mind
To act in any way they feel inclin'd;
As though we all, like Bats or Moles, were blind.
But ev'ry one, his eyes who uſes, knows
What kind of ſtore they ſet upon their vows.
Beyond the Alps, 'tis ſaid, that ev'ry Prieſt
Holds conſort with one Miſtreſs at the leaſt;
And what is winked at by the Court of Rome
No wonder ſhould be practiſed here at home.
The holy Fathers, if truth may be ſpoke,
Have Children juſt like any married Folk;
And, with paternal love, take care enough
None of their Offspring ſhall be badly off;
Theſe, never thinking what was their Mamma,
To lawful Children will not yield the *pas*;
Others they treat with as much ſlight and ſcorn,
As they were honeſtly, nay, nobly born.
Clad in the armor of ſheer impudence,
They have of ſhame or modeſty no ſenſe.
Time was, theſe baſe-born Sons o'th' Clergy knew
What was their proper place, and kept it too.

But now they go about as brave and bold
As any Lords. Such is the pow'r of gold.
" You ſee the Prieſt poſſeſſed, go where you will,
Of toll and tribute from each farm and mill;
And thus the World is diſciplined to ill.
No marvel the poor People go aſtray,
When, blind themſelves, the Blind lead them the way.

" Where for that pattern Paſtor ſhall we look
Content to feed and not to ſhear his flock;
Who the pure precepts of the Goſpel teaches,
And practiſes the doctrines that he preaches;
Who, if he ſuffer Wrong, will pardon it,
And turn his right cheek if his left be ſmit;
Who upon worldly treaſures ſets no ſtore,
But ſells his all and gives it to the Poor?
Alas! much readier a Prieſt you'll find
To pride, revenge and avarice inclin'd.
Such ſet the Laity a vile example,
And on all precepts of their Maſter trample.

" As for their Baſtards, would they quiet be,
No one on earth would notice them, you ſee.

'Tis but their vanity that we condemn;
For moſt unjuſt it were to carp at them.
It is not Race that makes us great or good;
Nor ſhame nor honor come by birth or blood.
Let Heralds draw what fancied lines they can,
Virtue and Vice alone mark man from man.
The honeſt Prieſt will ever honored be;
The bad be ſhunned, whate'er his pedigree;
How good ſoe'er the ſermons he may preach,
Folks will contraſt his actions with his ſpeech.
'What does he for the church?' they'll argue thus,
'He who is ever preaching up to us—
"Be ſure you keep your church in good repair,
"My Brethren, if of Grace you wiſh to ſhare:"
'For aught he does himſelf, while us he fleeces,
'The ſacred edifice might fall to pieces.'
"In coſtly fare and ſumptuous array
They ſquander more than half their wealth away.
Engroſſed with worldly thoughts, how can they
ſpare
Their time for acts of piety and pray'r?
While the good Paſtor—ſo at leaſt I've heard—
Devotes his life to th' ſervice of the Lord;

With modeſt temperance and ſober gaiety,
Setting a good example to the Laity.

" Full well too do I know the hooded claſs;
A dirty, frowzy, hypocritic Race;
A tribe of prowling, prying Creatures, which
Spend their whole time in hunting up the Rich.
Adepts in flattery, they reckon moſt
How they may uſe it on a liberal Hoſt.
If one but get a footing, three or four
Are ſure to follow, if not many more.
Who in the cloiſter only longeſt prates
Is ſure to gain promotion o'er his Mates;
Reader he's made, Librarian or Prior,
Or he may even mount to ſomething higher.
Others, as good as he, are thruſt aſide;
The prizes ſo unfairly they divide.
Some paſs their time in faſting and in pray'r,
While others ſleep, or ſumptuouſly fare.

" As for your Papal Legates, Prelates, Deans,
Your Abbeſſes, your Nuns, and your Beguines,
What tales might I tell of them if I would;
Yet little I regret to ſay that's good.
One cry they always have, and one alone;

'Tis, ' Give me yours and let me keep my own.'
But Few there are, not Ten assuredly,
Who strictly with their Founder's rules comply.
'Tis thus the Church acquires a doubtful name,
Is brought to weakness, and sometimes to shame."

" Uncle," the Badger said, " I cannot guess
Why you should other People's sins confess.
If they've done Ill, what Good is that to you?
With your own matters you've enough to do.
Why should you meddle with the Priests and Nuns?
Sure Mother Church can manage her own Sons.
Let each his own peculiar burdens bear;
Let each th' account of his own deeds prepare;
The audit-day will surely come, which none,
Or in, or out a cloister-walls, can shun.

" You talk too much though of all sorts of things;
Scarce can I follow all your wanderings;
I sometimes fear you'll leave me in the lurch:
Pity you did not go into the Church.
Great as your lore, you'd there find scope for it;
I should, with Others, reap the benefit.
The most of us, I own, are Brutes indeed,
And of good doctrine stand in awful need."

Now the Court's precincts they approached at laſt;
Said Reynard to himſelf—" The die is caſt!"
When on the road Martin the Ape they met,
Who off upon a tour to Rome had ſet;
And both he kindly greeted. " Uncle dear,"
Thus to the Fox, " be of good heart and cheer."
Then queſtions put he to him, not a few,
Although the ſtate of matters well he knew.
" My good luck ſeems for ever to have fled;"
To Martin then the wily Reynard ſaid;
" Some ſcurvy Comrades, moved by dirty ſpleen,
Again, I find, accuſing me have been.
The Rabbit and the Crow complain, I hear,
That one has loſt a Wife, and one, an ear.
But what on earth has that to do with me?
That would I make them pretty quickly ſee,
If to the King I could but get to ſpeak;
My cauſe I know is ſtrong, as theirs is weak.
But ſtill I labor 'neath the Papal Ban,
A wretched excommunicated man!
There's not a Soul, except the Prebendary,
Can reſcue me from out this ſad quandary.
Unhappily, though why I cannot tell,



REYNARD THE FOX

I don't ſtand, ſomehow, with the Clergy well.
This and more evils to a vaſt amount,
I ſuffer upon Iſegrim's account.

" A Monk he once became; but one fine day
He from the monaſtery ran away:
The rules he found too rigid, and he ſware
He loſt his time in faſting and in pray'r.
I helped his flight; a cauſe of deep regret,
Which I have ever felt and do ſo yet;
For nought ſince then he's done but ſlander me,
And work me ev'ry kind of injury.
What if I made a pilgrimage to Rome;
How would my family get on at home?
Iſegrim then would cauſe them endleſs Ill;
He'd have the pow'r, as he now has the will.
And many Others are there who deſign
All ſorts of miſchief both to me and mine.
If from this awful Ban I were but freed,
My cauſe at Court were certain to ſucceed."

Said Martin, " I am glad 'tis in my pow'r
To do you ſervice in this trying hour.
I am juſt ſtarting on a tour to Rome;
And may do much t' ameliorate your doom.

You are my Kinſman; ſet your mind at reſt;
I will not ſuffer you to be oppreſs'd.
I've ſome weight, as the Biſhop's Secretary;
I'll make them cite to Rome the Prebendary;
Againſt him in your cauſe will I make fight,
And, Uncle, they ſhall do you ample right.
The doom of Ban, reverſed ſhall ſhortly be,
Your abſolution I'll bring back with me.
Your Foes their long hoſtility ſhall rue,
Loſing their labor and their money too.
I know how cauſes may at Rome be won,
And what is beſt to do, what leave undone.
My Couſin, Simon, has great influence;
For our name's ſake he'll favor your defence:
There's Gripeall too, Greedy and Eitherſide,
And Turncoat, and I know not who beſide.
For I have at the College many a Friend,
Who to our cauſe their able aid will lend;
Or, rather let me ſay, their aid will ſell;
For only thoſe they help who fee them well.
I've ſent my money firſt, for that alone
Will there enſure that juſtice ſhall be done.
Loudly they talk of juſtice, and ſuch cant,

But 'tis your money that they really want.
How crooked be a cauſe, or intricate,
The touch of gold will make it plain and ſtraight.
With that to find a welcome you are ſure,
Without it, cloſed againſt you ev'ry door.

" Do you then, Uncle, ſtay at home; while I
Your knotty cauſe will manage to untie.
To Court 'twere beſt you ſhould at once repair;
Seek out my Wife, Dame Ruckenaw, when there;
She's a ſhrewd Soul, and with the King and Queen
A ſpecial Favorite has ever been.
Take her advice, whate'er ſhe recommend;
There's nothing but ſhe'll do t' oblige a Friend.
On many a ſtaunch Ally you there will light;
Such often help one more than being right.
Her Siſters two are ſure with her to be,
And my three Children, for I have but three;
And many others of our common Kin,
Who'll ſtoutly ſtick by you, through thick and thin.
Should juſtice be denied you, ſend to me,
And what my pow'r is you ſhall quickly ſee:
An awful Evil on this land ſhall fall,
On King, Men, Women, Children, one and all;

An Interdict ſhall on the realm be laid;
No ſervice ſhall be ſung, no maſs be ſaid,
No Chriſtian grave receive th' unhouſeled Dead.
The land a heathen deſert will I make;
Be of good cheer then, Coz, and comfort take.
" The Pope is old, nor ſound in mind or limb;
But Few he cares for, and None care for him.
'Tis Cardinal Wiſeacre rules the Church,
And crows, as rooſted on the higheſt perch;
To which no doubt one day he may aſpire,
For he is full of craft and full of fire.
He is enamoured of a certain Dame,
Whom well I know, and, if I would, could name.
Her wiſhes ſhe has only to make known;
And what ſhe wiſhes, is as good as done.
" But many tricks and frauds are played at Rome,
Which to the Pope's ears never chance to come.
But no one can get on without ſome aid;
Friends one muſt make, or buy them ready made.
Rely on me, dear Coz; the King well knows,
I will not ſee you fall before your Foes;
'Twere juſt as well, he ſhould remember too
How Many kindred claim, with me and you:

For ſober counſel, not a Family
At Court can with the Apes and Foxes vie.
This cannot fail your dangers to allay,
Let matters even take what turn they may."

Reynard replies, " There's nothing, deareſt Coz,
Gives me ſuch comfort as your friendſhip does:
I ſhall remember it, an I get free."
Then each the other greeted courteouſly;
And tow'rds the Court, to face his angry Foes,
Reynard, with no eſcort but Greybeard, goes.

REYNARD THE FOX

CHAPTER THE NINTH

THE ADVOCACY

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

REYNARD had now reached Court, and
ſtill had hope
With his Accuſers he might ſafely cope;
Yet when his num'rous Foes he ſaw arrayed,
All eager for revenge, he felt diſmayed;
But though his heart might tremble, with firm ſtride
He paſſed the Barons, Greybeard by his ſide.

Unto the Monarch's throne they both drew near,
When Greybeard whiſpered thus in Reynard's ear;
" Take courage, Uncle, for the King is gracious;
And, we know, Fortune favors the Audacious:
The Brave love danger on its own account,
And are more pleaſed the greater its amount."

And Reynard anſwered, " What you ſay is true;
Sage your advice, and comfortable too;
Were you in my place I'd ſo counſel you."

With ſearching eye he glanced th' aſſembly round

Where many Kinſmen, but few Friends, he found;
For at his hands the moſt but ill had fared;
The Otter nor the Beaver had he ſpared;
None but he'd played ſome pranks on, great or ſmall;
Yet with aſſurance now he greets them all.
And down before the throne he lowly knelt,
And boldly ſpake, howe'er he may have felt;
" May Heav'n above, from whom no thought or thing
Is hidden, long preſerve my Lord the King;
And my good Lady too and gracious Queen,
Whoſe humbleſt Vaſſal I am proud t' have been;
And grant you both ſound judgment, clear and ſtrong,
The diff'rence to diſcern 'tween Right and Wrong.
For falſehood now is rife in ev'ry ſpot;
Almoſt all men appear what they are not.
Would each man's thoughts were writ upon his brow,
So that his ſecret ſoul the King might know;
Then would it plainly to the world appear
How true and loyal is the heart I bear.

I know the Wicked rage together ſtill,
And howl againſt me, as they always will.
In ev'ry way to injure me they ſtrive,
And of Your countenance would quite deprive;
As though I were the verieſt Wretch alive.
But love of Juſtice is a mighty thing;
None own its pow'r, more than my Lord and King.
Let men ſeek to miſlead him as they may,
From the ſtraight path of Right he ne'er will ſtray."

While thus he ſpake the Courtiers round him throng,
All wond'ring at the boldneſs of his tongue.
His crimes ſo flagrant and notorious were,
That each was anxious his defence to hear.

" Thou raſcal Reynard!" thus the Monarch ſaid,
" Thy gloſing ſpeech thy cauſe can little aid;
On thy perſuaſive arts no more depend,
Thy ſhameleſs courſe at length hath reach'd its end.
Thy truth and loyalty we all well know,
As witneſs here the Rabbit and the Crow.
Full is the meaſure of thy wickedneſs,
And craft can nought avail thee, boldneſs leſs."

Reynard, uneaſy at this Royal ſpeech,
Feared now the King he might not over-reach,
For he had ſpoke in terms preciſe and plain;
Ah! how he wiſhed he were ſafe home again!
But wiſhing now could do him little good;
He muſt get through it the beſt way he could.
" Nobleſt and mightieſt of Kings;" he ſaid,
" Though you decree my life is forfeited,
I fain may hope that You will hear me firſt;
You've heard but one ſide, and that ſide the worſt.
When clouds and tempeſts o'er the ſtate were
hovering,
Firm have I ſtood and faithful to my Sovereign,
When ſome, that I could name, have fled their poſt,
Some who are now eſteemed and favored moſt,
Who bravely take each opportunity,
When I am abſent, moſt to ſlander me.
Hear only my defence and then decide;
My doom, whate'er it be, I muſt abide.
" Forgotten is my ſervice to the State?
How I have early watched and labored late?
If of all crimes not quite exempt I were,
Of my free will ſhould I now venture here?

I ſhould have ſhunned Your preſence conſcience-
ſcared
Nor my Accuſers thus to meet have dared.
Nay, the world's treaſures, heaped up ſeven-fold,
Should not have drawn me forth from my ſtrong
hold.
Upon my native heather I was free,
And none might touch me with impunity;
But my good Greybeard with the meſſage came
That I was wanted here, and here I am!
I had been counſel holding with the Ape,
How from the Papal Ban I might eſcape;
And he had promiſed to remove the whole
Of that oppreſſive burden from my ſoul.
'I will myſelf,' ſaid he, 'to Rome reſort;
'Do you, without delay, repair to Court;
'I'll undertake your character I'll clear.'
Such his advice; he'd own it were he here.
Our Biſhop knows the truth of much I ſtate;
Five years has Martin been his Surrogate.
"And here I find complaint upon complaint;
Enough to wear the patience of a Saint.
The ogling Rabbit has, I hear, a caſe;

Let him ſtand forth and meet me, face to face!
'Tis a light taſk the Abſent to accuſe;
But none to hear my anſwer can refuſe.
Scurvy Companions, are they, by my troth!
My Gueſts they've been, the Crow and Rabbit, both.

" 'Twas but the morning before yeſterday,
The latter tow'rds my dwelling came his way;
He greeted me in paſſing, ſoft and fair;
I'd juſt begun the form of Morning Pray'r.
He let me know that he for Court was bound;
I ſaid, 'Heav'n grant you get there ſafe and ſound.'
He ſpoke of empty ſtomach, weary feet;
I aſked, 'Will you take any thing to eat?'
'I fear I might intrude;' was his reply.
'Oh! not the ſlighteſt in the world,' ſaid I.
I fetched ſome wheaten bread and cherries freſh;
(On Wedn'ſdays 'tis my rule to eat no fleſh;)
And Maſter Bunny ſeemed contented quite,
And ate his bread and fruit with appetite.
My youngeſt Son, a forward little Chap,
Suddenly jumped into the Rabbit's lap,
To ſee if he might chance pick up a ſcrap.

'Twas rude, I own, but the Boy meant no ill;
Children you know, Sire, will be Children ſtill.
But, making no allowance for his youth,
The brutal Rabbit ſtruck him in the mouth.
Poor little Ruffell! 'twas too bad indeed;
For the blow made his lips and noſtrils bleed.
And then my eldeſt, Greykin, quick as thought,
Leapt up and ſeized th' Aggreſſor by the throat;
His game he played and 'venged his Brother well!
'Tis thus exactly how the thing befell.
I ran directly that I heard the noiſe,
Reſcued the Rabbit, and chaſtiſed the Boys.
I do not ſympathize with him a jot,
For richly he deſerved whate'er he got.
Had I meant ill, I had not interpoſed;
The Young Ones his account would ſoon have
cloſed.
And this is now my thanks! He ſays, I hear,
'Twas I myſelf that tore his ſtupid ear.
A blund'ring tale! I think my powers I know
Rather too well to botch a buſ'neſs ſo.
" As for the Crow, he came quite out of breath,
And ſaid his Wife had ate herſelf to death.

Some great Fiſh ſhe had gorged, gills, bones and all,
Had choked her, as her ſwallow was but ſmall.
The truth he beſt knows; but the Slanderer
Now dares aſſert that I have murdered her;
May-be he did, himſelf; there's none can tell;
For my own part, it were impoſſible;
Theſe dingy Devils, when they chooſe to fly,
No ſpring of mine could reach, however high.
" Thoſe who bring forward charges ſuch as theſe
Should prove them by truſtworthy Witneſſes.
This ev'ry Freeman may of right demand;
And on my Right I boldly take my ſtand.
Are there no proofs; another courſe is clear;
Lo! ready to do battell am I here!
Let both the day and place be now aſſign'd;
And if a worthy Adverſ'ry I find,
In birth my equal, I'll the combat dare;
And he the honor who then wins may wear.
Such ever was the rule of law of yore;
So be it now, for I deſire no more."

All ſtood and heard and wondered, Beaſts and Birds,
At the audacity of Reynard's words.



The Crow and Rabbit both felt dire diſmay,
And ſecretly from Court they ſtole away;
Nor did they dare another word to ſay.

They muttered to each other; "'Twere indeed
Unwiſe againſt him further to proceed.
Do what we may, no better ſhould we be;
For after all, what Witneſſes have we?
The truth unto ourſelves is only known,
For with the Felon we were each alone.
So in the end on us the loſs would fall.
Oh! would the Devil ſeize him, once for all!
And he propoſes battell now! To us!
Truly the thought is too prepoſterous!
So powerful and cunning as he is;
So full of vigor and of trickeries!
'Twould take to face him five as good as we,
And even then he'd beat them eaſily."

Both Iſegrim and Bruin groaned with ire,
When from the Court they ſaw the Twain retire.

"Are any preſent here," then ſaid the King,
Who againſt Reynard have a charge to bring?
If any ſuch there be, let them advance;
For he ſtands here on his deliverance.

There were enough to threaten yeſterday;
And now their time is come; but where are they?"
Said Reynard, "Ah! 'tis ever the old game;
Thoſe who againſt the Abſent moſt declaim,
Boaſting what they could do, would he but come,
When he arrives, ſtay prudently at home.
Theſe Sland'rers vile, the Rabbit and the Crow,
Fain would have brought poor me to ſhame and woe.
But I forgive, ſince they are penitent;
Moſt thoroughly aſhamed away they went.
How dangerous it is, you all have ſeen,
T' encourage thoſe who ſlander abſent men.
They ſcruple not the truth aſide to wreſt,
And victimiſe the Wiſeſt and the Beſt.
To Others only do theſe words apply,
Of little moment to the State am I."
"Hear me!" exclaimed the King, "thou Traitor vild!
Say, where is Puſs, the Gentle and the Mild?
My brave and truſty Courier was he,
And treacherouſly ſlain hath been by thee.
Had I not pardoned thee thy numerous crimes?
Equipped thee forth to viſit holy climes,

With ſcrip and ſtaff and other pilgrim gear,
Believing thy repentance was ſincere?
And thy firſt act was my poor Puſs to kill!
Bellyn thou mad'ſt thy Meſſenger of ill:
He in thy wallet brought the mangled head;
And here in open Court unbluſhing ſaid,
He brought deſpatches which you both had framed,
Though he the larger ſhare of merit claimed:
But in the wallet was the head alone!
To make a mock and gibe at Me 'twas done!
One though hath ſuffered for the baſe deſign;
Bellyn hath loſt his life; look thou to thine!"

"Great Heav'ns! What do I hear?" ſly Reynard ſaid,

"Puſs murdered! Gracious Pow'rs! and Bellyn dead!

Oh, fatal hour! oh, curſed love of pelf!
Alas! alas! that I were dead myſelf!
With them the choiceſt treaſures have I loſt!
Jewels, ſuch as the wide world cannot boaſt!
The rareſt things by them I ſent for You;
For I believed them loyal both, and true.
Of Bellyn who would credit ſuch a thing,

His Friend to murder and to rob his King?
Who on this earth could e'er expect to find
Such craft with ſuch ſimplicity combin'd?"

To hear him out the Monarch would not ſtay,
He roſe and tow'rds his palace took his way;
Nor caught diſtinctly all that Reynard ſpake:
Determined was he deep revenge to take.
To his own cloſet did he ſtraight withdraw,
And found the Queen there with Dame Ruckenaw;
A ſpecial Fav'rite had ſhe ever been,
The ſly She-ape, both with the King and Queen;
She haply now might do the Fox ſome good;
For ſhe was wiſe and wary, ſage and ſhrewd.
Certain was ſhe, wherever ſhe appeared,
To be by all reſpected and revered.
Marking the angry fluſh on the King's cheek,
With thoughtful words thus gravely did ſhe ſpeak:

" Whenever, gracious Sire, at my requeſt,
You have allowed me counſel to ſuggeſt,
Ne'er yet have You had reaſon to repent;
Nor have you deemed me too impertinent,
If, when my Liege was in an angered mood,
A word of warning I have dared t' intrude.

Once more vouchſafe, Sire, to extend Your grace;
This matter toucheth one of mine own race;
Who would deſert a Friend in ſuch a caſe?
Reynard's my kinſman, be he what he may;
But what I think of him I'll frankly ſay;
Now he is here and ſtands upon his Right,
His cauſe I view in a more hopeful light.
Had not his Father, whoſe fame ſtill endures,
And who was graced and countenanced by Yours,
With evil tongues for ever to contend,
And from falſe charges his good name defend?
But ſtill his Foes he baffled in the end.
When thoroughly was ſifted the affair,
'Twas found what cloſe inſpection it would bear.
Although his Sland'rers charged him many a time
With incapacity, as well as crime;
Yet he retained his ſtation to the laſt,
And, as the Bear and Wolf are now, was grac'd.
'Twould be as well if they themſelves could clear
From all that 'gainſt their characters we hear.
But of the rules of Right they nothing know;
Both what they ſay proves this, as what they do."
Then the King anſwered; "Can you wonder,
Dame,

That Reynard's conduct ſhould my wrath inflame?
My truſty Hare did he not baſely ſlay?
And lead that Simpleton, the Ram, aſtray?
And now preſumes in open Court, forſooth,
To boaſt about his loyalty and truth;
When by the gen'ral voice accuſed he ſtands,
Of crimes unnumbered as the ocean ſands!
'Tis proved beyond the ſhadow of a doubt,
He breaks My peace and ſets My laws at nought.
With robberies and murders, day and night,
My land and Lieges doth he vex and 'fright!
I'll bear no more!" Then anſwered the She-Ape;
" Not ev'ry one his courſe can wiſely ſhape.
'Tis hard to pleaſe all men, and giv'n to few
Both to deſerve ſucceſs and get it too:
And he who proſpers, in his path ſhall find
Honor before, Envy and Hate behind;
His Foes in ſecret will his ruin ſcheme,
When open fight too dangerous they deem.
" And many a time hath this to Reynard happed.
It cannot have Your memory eſcaped,
How often to your reſcue he hath come,
With counſel ſage, when all the reſt were dumb.

What fine diſcernment through his judgment ran
In that late leading caſe of ‘ *Snake* and *Man*.’
None could decide the iſſue that was raiſed,
But he alone: how was his wiſdom praiſed!”

Noble the King reflected a brief ſpace,
Then anſwered; “ Yes, I recollect the caſe;
But all the details I have quite forgot.
’Twas moſt confuſed and tangled; was it not?
I pray you, if you can, the facts relate.”

“ Briefly,” ſaid ſhe, “ the whole affair I’ll ſtate.

“ Two years ago, a Snake of Dragon race
Loudly accuſed a Peaſant to Your Grace.
The Man refuſed her juſtice, ſhe complained,
Though twice againſt him ſhe had judgment gained.
The Man appearing to defend the wrong,
She entered on her caſe with eager tongue.

“ Through a ſmall op’ning in a hedge one day
The Snake, it ſeem’d, had tried to force her way;
A ſpringe there was before the op’ning plac’d,
Which, as ſhe entered, caught and held her faſt.
She muſt perforce have periſhed where ſhe lay,
But that a Trav’ller chanced to paſs that way;
To whom ſhe loudly cried; ‘ Oh! pity me!

‘ Let me implore thee, Sir! and ſet me free!’
And the Man ſaid; ‘ Well, I will let thee looſe;
‘ ’Tis hard to ſee thee ſtrangling in that nooſe.
‘ Yet ere I do it, thou muſt frankly ſwear
‘ From ev’ry miſchief tow’rds me to forbear.’
A ſolemn oath the anxious Dragon vowed,
Ne’er to harm him to whom her life ſhe owed.
Then from the ſnare the Man the Snake releaſed;
All gratitude ſhe was, or ſeemed at leaſt.

“ They travelled on together, but ere long
The Dragon felt the pains of hunger ſtrong,
And in a moment on the Man ſhe flew,
Thinking to ſtrangle and devour him too.
With fearful energy he ſprang aſide,
And ‘ Oh! is this your gratitude?’ he cried,
‘ Is this the way you keep that awful oath?’
Said ſhe, ‘ To break it I am truly loath,
‘ But I am poſitively faint with hunger;
‘ I feel a gnawing I can bear no longer.
‘ I know how ſhocking is ingratitude;
‘ But cannot periſh here for want of food.’
‘ Spare me a little yet;’ the Man replied;
‘ Some People we may meet who ſhall decide,

‘ Impartial Judges betwixt thee and me.’
‘ Well!’ tartly ſaid the Snake; ‘ ſo let it be!’
“ They journey’d on, till, coming to a pond,
Strongnib, the Raven, with his Son they found;
His name was Little Beakey. Theſe the Snake
Begged the arbitrement to undertake.
The Raven heard the caſe with thoughtful care,
And, hoping to himſelf might fall a ſhare,
Straight gave his judgment that the Man be eaten.
‘ Now,’ cried the Snake triumphant, ‘ I have beaten;
‘ My honeſt purpoſe ſhall no more be croſt.’
‘ Nay,’ ſaid the Man, ‘ I have not fairly loſt.
‘ How ſhall a Thief on life and death decide?
‘ Or ſuch a caſe by one ſole Judge be tried?
‘ I ſtand upon my Right and ſhall appeal;
‘ A Court of four or ten I ſafe might feel.’
‘ Come on then,’ ſaid the Snake; and off they ſet;
Ere long with both the Wolf and Bear they met.
The poor Man now was ſeized with mortal terror;
Sure five ſuch Judges never ſat in error;
A Bear, a Wolf, two Ravens and a Snake;
Well might th’ Appellant for his ſafety quake.
The hungry Court were ſoon unanimous;

And the grim Wolf delivered judgment thus;—
'The Snake beyond all doubt the Man might kill,
'Yet keep her conſcience quite unburdened ſtill;
'Twas plain no law neceſſity could know,
'And hunger would releaſe from any vow.'
"Anxious enough the Man was, for the five
Had plain made up their minds he ſhould not live.
Then darting forth her forked and poiſ'nous tongue
Again the Snake upon the Trav'ller ſprung.
He leapt aſide with prompt dexterity,
Crying, 'Who gave thee power over me?'
'Twice thou thyſelf haſt heard it;' ſhe replied;
'Twice has the judgment been upon my ſide.'
Then ſaid the Man, 'Judges yourſelves ye call!
'Robbers and Murd'rers are ye, one and all!
'You and your judgment I repudiate;
'King Noble only ſhall decide my fate;
'To him do I appeal; to his decree
'Will I ſubmit, though adverſe it ſhould be.'
"Then ſaid the Wolf and Bear with jeering grin,
'You'd better try; the Snake is ſure to win.'
They thought no doubt that the aſſembled Peers
Would counſel You, Sire, juſt like Wolves and Bears.

Five preſſed againſt poor One, his life to take;
The Wolf, the Bear, the Ravens and the Snake.
The Wolf indeed put in a triple claim;
His Sons, Thinpaunch and Greedyguts by name,
Each hoped to have a ſhare of the poor Man;
A terrible diſturbance theſe began;
Howling and clamoring in ſuch a ſort,
That both were promptly ordered out of Court.
" Humbly imploring juſtice of your Grace,
Then did the Man begin to ſtate his caſe;—
The Snake now wiſhed to kill him, heedleſs both
Of all his kindneſs, and her ſolemn oath.
The facts the Snake knew could not be denied, hence
She pleaded in confeſſion and avoidance;—
Th' almighty pow'r of hunger was the cauſe,
Which owns no maſter and obeys no laws.'
" Sore puzzled were You, Sire, how to decide;
Solution it appeared the caſe defied;
Hard to condemn the honeſt Man it ſeemed;
And hard to bear ſharp hunger's tooth, You deemed.
Your Council then You ſummoned to Your aid,
Who only more involved the queſtion made;
Moſt part gave judgment that the Man ſhould die,

But gave their reaſons too, unluckily;
And theſe ſo bad and inconſiſtent were,
The more they gave, the more they 'broiled th'
affair.
For Reynard, as a laſt reſource, You ſent;
He came and heard afreſh the argument;
You the deciſion left to him alone,
And ſaid as he adjudged it ſhould be done.

" Then Reynard ſaid, ' Ere I decide the caſe,
' 'Tis needful I ſhould go and view the place;
' And ſee the very way the Snake was bound,
' When by the Traveller ſhe firſt was found.'
So to the ſpot they ſallied, and when there,
The Snake again was faſtened in the ſnare;
Thus matters ſtood exactly as they were.

" Then Reynard gave his judgment: ' Things
are now
' Juſt as before the cauſe aroſe below;
' And neither Party can of triumph boaſt,
' For neither now has won, and neither loſt;
' And as the circumſtances now appear,
' The juſtice of the caſe to me ſeems clear:
' If the Man pleaſe to do ſo, from the nooſe

‘ The Snake, upon her oath, he may let looſe;
‘ If not, then he can let her hang there ſtill,
‘ And go about his buſ’neſs if he will.
‘ Such are my views: if better here there be,
‘ Impart them; or, if not, uſe theſe with me.’

“ Reynard’s deciſion of this weighty cauſe
Met at that time with general applauſe,
From You, my Liege, and all who knew the laws.
The Man vowed better it could not have been;
It even gained th’ approval of the Queen.

“ ’Twas on all hands agreed that fitter far
Bruin and If’grim were to ſerve in war;
For they were known and feared in ev’ry ſpot,
And gladly went where plunder might be got.
Strong are they, big and bold; that none denies,
Yet are their words more bold and big than wiſe;
And too much of their ſtrength alone they brag,
While in the field behind they often lag.
At home the Braveſt of the Brave are they;
At home too always they prefer to ſtay.
In ſooth the Bears and Wolves eat up the land;
’Gainſt their united force there’s nought can ſtand.
What matters it to them whoſe houſe may burn?

To warm them by the flames will ſerve their turn.
What matters it to them who pine or ſtarve?
While their own meals they take good care to carve.
They gulp the yolk, and leave the ſhell, and ſwear
That the partition is moſt juſt and fair.
Reynard the Fox though, on the other hand,
The rules of juſtice well doth underſtand;
And if ſome evil he perchance have done,
Remember, Sire, he is not made of ſtone.
A wiſer Counſellor You ne'er ſhall meet;
Hence am I bold his pardon to entreat."

And the King ſaid; "I muſt awhile reflect.
The judgment I diſtinctly recollect;
Juſtice was done unto the Snake, 'tis plain:
Yet ſtill a Rogue is Reynard in the main.
Who truſts him is deceived beyond all doubt;
No bonds ſo tight but he will riggle out.
The Wolf, the Bear, the Cat before; and now
Hath he aſſailed the Rabbit and the Crow;
One of an eye, another of an ear,
A third of life itſelf he ſpoils, you hear;
And yet, though why I cannot comprehend,
You ſeek the odious Monſter to defend."

" Ah! Sire, I cannot from myſelf conceal
The ſervice he hath done the Commonweal;"
Thus the Ape anſwered; " nor will you deny
How num'rous are his Friends and Family."
Then roſe the King of Beaſts and iſſued ſtraight
To where th' aſſembled Court his coming wait.
Round that vaſt circle as he caſts his eyes,
A hoſt of Reynard's Relatives he ſpies;
To vindicate their Kinſman's cauſe they came,
And in ſuch numbers they were hard to name;
They ranged together cloſe: on th' other ſide
The num'rous Foes of Reynard he deſcried;
The Court they ſeemed between them to divide.
And thus began the Monarch; " Reynard, hear;
Thyſelf from this one crime how canſt thou clear?
By thee, with Bellyn's help, the Hare is dead;
As a deſpatch thou ſend'ſt Me back his head.
'Twas done to mock My pow'r, that well I know;
But Bellyn has atoned, and ſo muſt thou."
" Woe's me! would I were dead!" the Fox replied;
" But as You find the truth, Sire, ſo decide.
If I am guilty, let me die, and ſhame

Fall as a heritage upon my name.
Bellyn, the Traitor vile, hath filched from me
The rareſt Treaſure eye did ever ſee.
To him and Puſs 'twas giv'n; and ſure I am,
That Puſs was robbed and murdered by the Ram.
Oh! could it but be found; though much I fear
It never more to daylight will appear."

"Nay," ſaid the ſly She-ape, "why thus de-
ſpond?
If 'tis on earth it ſurely may be found.
Early and late we'll ſeek and never tire;
Of Prieſts, as well as Laymen, we'll inquire.
But, that our labor may not be in vain,
What were the Jewels like 'twere beſt explain."

"Ah, well-a-day!" ſaid Reynard; "but they
were
Such wond'rous coſtly things, ſo rich and rare!
To get them back I have but little hope;
None but an Idiot e'er would give them up.
How will it vex poor Ermelyne, my wife;
I fear ſhe'll not forgive me all her life.
For, doubting Bellyn, if not Puſſy too,
She begged me not to let the Treaſures go.

" I would commence the ſearch this very day;
But theſe falſe charges force me here to ſtay;
I'm bound in honor to defend my Right,
By the bold ordeal of judicial fight.
If I ſucceed,—as ſure ſucceed I muſt,
Since I am innocent and Heav'n is juſt,—
Unſought I will not leave one ſpot of ground,
But theſe loſt Jewels ſhall again be found."

REYNARD THE FOX

CHAPTER THE TENTH

THE SECOND PARDON

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

"MY Liege!" thus ran the Fox's crafty ſpeech;
"Before my Friends a hearing I be-ſeech;
What Treaſures let them learn for You were ſent;
For though 'twas foiled, yet good was mine intent;
On me the blame falls not, but on the Thief."
"Say on;" the Monarch anſwered, "but be brief."
"Honor and Faith, alas! from earth have fled!"
With well-diſſembled grief then Reynard ſaid:
"The firſt of theſe choice Jewels was a Ring;
Deſigned a ſpecial preſent for my King.
Of fineſt, pureſt gold this Ring was caſt;
Yet was the ſubſtance by the work ſurpaſs'd;
E'en the Crown Jewels 'twould not have diſgrac'd.
On th' inner ſide, that next the finger worn,
Engraven letters did the hoop adorn;

Three Hebrew words of meaning ſtrange they were;
Few in this land could read the character.
To Maſter Abryon of Triers alone,
The meaning of thoſe myſtic words was known:
He is a wiſe and very learned Jew,
Skilled in all tongues 'twixt Luen'burg and Poitou;
With ſtones and herbs is he acquainted well;
Knows of what uſe each one is capable.
He ſaid, when unto him I ſhewed the Ring;
'Concealed here lies full many a curious thing;
'Theſe three engraven names, from Paradiſe
'Were brought of yore by Seth, the Good and Wiſe;
'When he, of coming Ills to Man fore-taught,
'In Eden's bow'rs the Oil of Mercy ſought.
'Who on his finger wears this Ring ſhall be
'From ev'ry riſk and peril always free;
'Lightning nor thunder-bolt nor magic charm
'Shall potent be to work him woe or harm.'
And furthermore the cunning Maſter ſaid,
Whoſe finger bore that Ring, ſo he had read,
Should never freeze in winter's direſt cold,
And calmly live in years and honors old.
"On th' outer ſide was ſet a precious Stone,

A brilliant Carbuncle by night that ſhone,
And, with its clear and phoſphoreſcent ray,
All things diſcovered, plain as it were day.
Great pow'rs too had this Stone the Sick to heal;
Whoſo but touched it free from crime ſhould feel;
Nor grief nor trouble could his mind diſturb;
The pow'r of Death alone it could not curb.
And the ſage Maſter unto me made known
The further virtues of this wond'rous Stone;
As thus; the proud Poſſeſſor of the Gem
Both fire and water may alike contemn;
Safe from the power of each Enemy,
Betrayed or captured can he never be.
If faſting, on the Stone he gaze, fourſcore
Of Foes ſhall he o'ercome in fight, and more.
The virtues of that Jewel can reduce
The ſtrength of poiſon and each deadly juice.
Hate it at once will quell; nay, e'en will often
The hearts of thoſe you have befriended ſoften.
" But who could count this Jewel's virtues o'er?
I found it haply 'mong my Father's ſtore;
And kept it ever ſacred for my King:
Myſelf I knew unworthy ſuch a Ring.

Of right it appertained to him alone,
Whoſe virtues ſhed a luſtre on his Throne;
On whom depend our hopes and welfare ſtill,
Whoſe life I've ever guarded, ever will.
" I truſted alſo, luckleſs that I am!
A Comb and Mirror to that treach'rous Ram.
I hoped that they accepted might have been,
As a memorial, by my gracious Queen.
They were, in ſooth, moſt precious works of art,
And form'd too of my Father's hoard a part.
Coveted were they greatly by my Wife,
And cauſed, alas! between us, frequent ſtrife;
She fairly longed for them, ſhe uſed to ſay;
But yet I ne'er a ſingle inch gave way.
" Both Comb and Mirror I, with beſt intent,
Unto my gracious Lady freely ſent.
A Benefactreſs kind in Her I ſee;
From Evil hath ſhe ever ſhielded me;
When ſland'rous charges 'gainſt me were preferr'd,
She oft hath interpoſed a friendly word.
Royal She is by qualities and birth;
And both by words and works She proves her worth.
None ſo deſerved thoſe Treaſures as my Queen;

And yet their beauty hath She never ſeen;
And—ah! that I ſhould ſay ſo—never will!
To find them now, I fear, is paſt all ſkill.
" Firſt of the Comb to ſpeak. To faſhion that,
The Artiſt took bones of the Civet-cat;
That wond'rous Beaſt that lives on flow'rs and ſpice,
And dwells 'twixt India's ſhores and Paradiſe.
Dyed is his ſkin with tints of various hues;
And ſweeteſt odors round doth he diffuſe;
Hence do all other Beaſts his footſteps trace,
And follow him about from place to place;
For they all feel and know, his very ſmell
Is certain to preſerve them ſound and well.
'Twas of ſuch bone this precious Comb was made;
His rareſt ſkill the Artiſt had diſplayed;
It equalled poliſhed ſilver in its brightneſs,
And e'en ſurpaſſed it in its luſtrous whiteneſs;
Its ſcent excelled cloves, pinks and cinnamon;
For the Beaſt's odor lives in ev'ry bone;
Corruption may his fleſhly frame aſſail,
But o'er his ſkeleton can nought prevail;
This never knows decay or gives offence,
But keeps away all plague and peſtilence.

" Upon the Comb's broad back one might behold
A large blue Stone engrained with threads of gold;
Where ſtood in figures, carved in high relief,
The tale of Paris, the young Trojan Chief;
Who one day, ſitting by a river's ſtrand,
Three Godlike Women ſaw before him ſtand;
Juno, Minerva, Venus, were they named;
Each for herſelf had long an Apple claimed;—
Though once 'twas common to them all indeed;—
To end this ſtrife, at length they thus agreed;
Paris the golden Apple ſhould decree
To her he judged the Faireſt of the Three,
And hers alone it evermore ſhould be.
All Three the Youth with curious eye ſurveyed;
' Let me be faireſt held,' thus Juno ſaid;
' Let but the Apple be decreed as mine;
' And riches infinite henceforth are thine.'
Minerva then; ' The prize on me beſtow,
' And mighty ſhalt thou be on earth below;
' Dreadful thy name alike to Friend and Foe.'
Laſt, Venus; ' Why to Wealth or Might aſpire?
' Is not King Priamus of Troy thy Sire?
' Are not thy Brethren, Hector and the reſt,

‘ Supreme in wealth and pow’r by All confeſt?
‘ And while their arms ſtill ſhelter Troy, your ſway
‘ Does not this land, and foreign realms obey?
‘ If Beauty’s Prize thou unto me award,
‘ Thine the beſt treaſure Earth can e’er afford:
‘ That treaſure is a Woman paſt compare,
‘ Noble and prudent, virtuous and fair:
‘ Give me the Apple; Greece’s peerleſs Queen
‘ Thou ſhalt poſſeſs; Helen the famed, I mean.’
To her the Apple then awarded he,
Adjudging her the Faireſt of the Three.
He by her friendly aid that Lady gay,
The Spouſe of Menelaus, ſtole away;
And long did her ſweet fellowſhip enjoy,
Secure within the ſacred walls of Troy.

“ Carved was this ſtory on a middle field;
Round which, with graven words, ſtood many a ſhield;
That whoſo took the Comb up in his hand,
The fable there might read and underſtand.

“ Next of the Mirror hear. In lieu of glaſs,
A clear and beauteous Berylſtone there was;
All things were ſhewn therein, though miles away;

And that, by night as plainly as by day.
Whoſo upon his face or ſpeck or ſpot,
Or in his eye perchance a cock had got,
Let him but gaze upon that Mirror clear,
And ev'ry blemiſh ſtraight ſhould diſappear.
Who would not, having ſuch a treaſure boaſt?
Who would not grieve for ſuch a treaſure loſt?

" Out of a coſtly wood was made the frame,
Cloſe-grained and ſhining; Shittim is its name;
No worm can pierce it; and men juſtly hold,
'Tis more than equal to its weight in gold.
The neareſt that comes to it in degree,
For its rare qualities, is Ebony.
'Twas of this wood, ſo ſhining and cloſe-grained,
In days of yore, when King Crompardes reigned,
A cunning Artiſt framed a wond'rous Steed,
Of mighty powers and unrivalled ſpeed;
His Rider in a ſhort hour's ſpace he bore,
With greateſt eaſe, one hundred miles, or more.
I know not all the facts; but any how
A Steed like that you cannot meet with now.

" The Mirror's border, for a good foot wide,
With exquiſite carved work was beautified;

And 'neath each ſubject an inſcription ſtood,
In golden letters, which its meaning ſhew'd.
Briefly of each of theſe will I diſcourſe:
Firſt came the ſtory of the envious Horſe;
Who, racing for a wager with a Stag,
Was greatly vexed ſo far behind to lag.
A Shepherd, on the plain, he thus addreſs'd;
'I'll make thee wealthy, do but my beheſt.
'A Stag has hid himſelf in yonder brake;
'I'll carry thee; mount boldly on my back;
'Him thou ſhalt ſlay, and fleſh and horns and fell
'In the next market town canſt dearly ſell.
'Mount on my back at once; we'll give him chaſe.'
'I'll venture,' ſaid the Swain, 'in any caſe;
'No harm can come of the experiment.'
So up he mounted, and away they went.
The Stag they ſaw a little way ahead;
They followed faſt, and faſt away he fled,
Till the earth trembled under their thundering tread.
Long the Chaſe laſted; but the nimble Hart
Of his Purſuers had, and kept the ſtart;
Until at length, relaxing in his ſpeed,

Thus ſpake, panting, the over-wearied Steed;
‘ Prithee diſmount, for I am quite diſtreſt;
‘ Heavy thou art, and I have need of reſt.’
‘ No, by my ſoul!’ the Shepherd Man replied;
‘ It was thyſelf invited me to ride;
‘ I’ve got thee and I’ll keep thee in my pow’r.’
And Man’s Slave has the Horſe been ſince that hour.
Thus Evils, which for Others had been ſped,
Will oft rebound on the Projector’s head.

“ Now further hear, while I with truth allege
What next was carved around the Mirror’s edge:
How once upon a time it came to paſs,
A rich Man owned a Spaniel and an Aſs;
The Dog was never known to bark or bite,
And was deſervedly a Favorite;
At table by his Maſter’s ſide he ſate,
Fiſh, fleſh and fowl together with him ate;
Or reſted in his lap, and there was fed
With dainty morſels of beſt wheaten bread.
The Spaniel then, who was a Hound of grace,
Would wag his tail, and lick his Maſter’s face.
Now Neddy, when he ſaw the Dog’s good luck
With envy and aſtoniſhment was ſtruck;

‘ With my Lord’s taſtes,’ ſaid he, ‘ how can it ſuit
‘ To be ſo partial to that lazy Brute?
‘ Up in his lap it jumps, and licks his beard,
‘ As though by ſuch ſtrange antics ’twere endear’d;
‘ While I muſt toil and travail, in and out,
‘ Fetch faggots home, and carry ſacks about.
‘ I wiſh my Lord would think the matter o’er,
‘ And take a dozen Dogs, or e’en a ſcore;
‘ I’d wager, in a year they’d not get through
‘ One half the work that in a month I do.
‘ While with the beſt his Dogſhip fills his maw;
‘ Half ſtarved am I, or only ſtuffed with ſtraw.
‘ On the hard earth my couch has ever been;
‘ And jeered and mocked am I, wherever ſeen.
‘ I can and will this life no longer bear;
‘ In my Lord’s favors I will have my ſhare.’
Juſt as he ſpoke, his Maſter chanced to paſs;
His game at once begins that ſtupid Aſs;
Cocks up his bended tail, lays back his ears,
And o’er his frighted Lord curvetting rears;
Brays long and loudly, while his beard he licks,
And ſtrives to imitate the Spaniel’s tricks,
Careſſing him with hard and luſty kicks.

His terror-ſtricken Maſter ſprang aſide;
'Oh! take this horrid Aſs away!' he cried;
'Kill him at once!' His Servants run in haſte;
With ſhowers of blows poor Neddy's ſides they baſte;
Then in his ſtable lock him up again:
And thus the Aſs he was he doth remain.

"How many are there of this ſelf-ſame brood,
Who, envying Others, do themſelves no good.
Set theſe in place or pow'r, and juſt as ſoon
Might you feed Porkers with a ſilver ſpoon.
Let the Aſs ſtill his burdens duly bear;
Of ſtraw and thiſtles make his bed and fare:
Treat him in any other way you will,
The Brute retains his former habits ſtill;
And, taking human nature for his guide,
Seeks his own ends, and cares for nought beſide.

"Further will I this narrative purſue;
If theſe long tales, Sire, do not weary You.
Around the Mirror's border next was placed,
Carved in relief with proper legends graced,
The ſtory how Sir Tybalt, heretofore,
Eternal friendſhip with my Father ſwore:
Each vowed to Each to prove a firm Ally,

And common danger jointly to defy.
Trav'lling along one day they chanced to hear
A cry of Hounds and Huntſmen in their rear.
'Hark to thoſe ſounds,' cried Tybalt; 'good advice
'Were worth, at ſuch a moment, any price.'
The old one ſaid, 'Your terrors, prithee, lull;
'Of wiles and ſhifts I have a budget full.
'Let's ſtick together, nor forget our oath;
'And they ſhall Neither of us have, or Both.'
(He ſaid this merely Tybalt to conſole;
He had no ſhifts or wiles, good ſimple Soul!)
'Bother the oath!' replied the treach'rous Cat;
'Methinks I know a trick worth two of that.'
Into a tree, as faſt as he could tear,
He climbed, and left his Uncle planted there.
The poor Soul ſtood awhile in anxious doubt;
While near and nearer came that Hunter rout.
Then ſaid the Cat; 'Uncle, as you don't climb,
'You'd better ope your budget; now's the time!'
Juſt then the Beagles caught my Sire in view;
The Huntſmen ſhouted, and their horns they blew;
Off ran my Father; after him the Hounds;
Amid a perfect Babel of mad ſounds;

Barking and bellowing and bugle-blowing,
Enough to ſet the very Devil going.
My Father ſwate again for very fright,
His ſewmets caſt, and made himſelf more light;
And ſo at length he 'ſcaped his Foes by flight.
Thus by his beſt of Friends was he betray'd,
By him to whom he truſted moſt for aid.
His life was perilled, for thoſe Dogs were ſwift;
The hole he fled to was his only ſhift;
And had he not remembered that in time,
His Foes would ſoon have made ſhort work of him.
" Would of ſuch ſcurvy Scum the world were rid,
Who treat their Friends as ſubtle Tybalt did.
How can I love or honor ſuch a Knave,
Who's ſinned the more, the more I pardoned have?
All this was figured round the Mirror's frame,
With legends fit to mark the moral aim.
" Upon the next compartment might be view'd
A ſpecimen of lupine gratitude.
The Wolf had found a Horſe's ſkeleton,
For little was there left of it but bone;
He gnawed voracious and, by evil luck,
A pointed fragment in his gullet ſtuck;

His ſufferings were terrible to ſee,
He was as nearly choked as Wolf could be.
He ſent forth Meſſenger on Meſſenger
To call the Doctors in, from far and near;
But though he promiſed they ſhould well be paid,
Not one could render him the ſlighteſt aid.
At length appeared the learned Doctor Crane,
With crimſon bonnet and gold-pommelled cane.
'Oh! help me, Doctor!' cries the Invalid;
'Oh! help me, I beſeech you, and with ſpeed;
'But from my throat take out this curſed bone,
'And any fee you name ſhall be your own.'
The Crane of his profeſſions felt no doubt;
He ſtuck his long bill down the Wolf's huge throat,
And in a jiffey pulled the ſharp bone out.
'Zounds!' howled the Wolf; 'you give me monſtrous pain!
'Take care you never hurt me ſo again!
'I pardon you; had it Another been,
'I might not have ſo patient proved, I ween.'
'The bone's extracted;' ſaid the cautious Crane;
'You're cured; ſo never mind a little pain.

‘ As other Patients are expecting me,
‘ I’ll go, if you’ll oblige me with my fee.’
‘ Hark to the Simpleton!’ the rude Wolf ſaid;
‘ He’s hurt me, and yet wiſhes to be paid.
‘ ’Twould ſeem the ſtupid Idiot cannot know
‘ How much to my forbearance he doth owe.
‘ His bill and head, which both were in my maw,
‘ Unharmed have I allowed him to withdraw:
‘ Methinks that I ſhould aſk for the reward!’
’Tis thus the Strong all juſtice diſregard.
“ Theſe tales, and others of a kindred taſte,
In high relief artiſtically chaſ’d,
With legends graved in characters of gold,
Around the Mirror’s frame one might behold.
Too good for me ſo rare a work had been,
For I am all too humble, all too mean;
Therefore I ſent it for my gracious Queen.
To her and You, my Liege, I hoped ’twould prove
A token of my loyalty and love.
Much did my Children, little Dears, lament,
When from their home away the Glaſs was ſent.
Before it, they were wont, the livelong day,
To ſkip about and dance and friſk and play,

And laugh, in childiſh innocence of mind,
To ſee their long thick bruſhes trail behind.
Ah! little did I then anticipate
The Ram's foul treaſon or the Hare's ſad fate!
I thought they both were Beaſts of honeſt worth,
And the two deareſt Friends I had on earth.
Accurſed the Murd'rer's mem'ry I denounce!
All hope though will I not as yet renounce;
Where'er the Treaſures are, I make no doubt
To find them ſtill; like Murder, Theft will out.
Much I ſuſpect that Some there preſent are,
Who know the truth about the whole affair;
Both what befell the Jewels and the Hare.

" Full well I know, my Liege, what weighty
things
Muſt daily occupy the minds of Kings.
It does not ſtand with reaſon to expect,
Each trifling matter You ſhould recollect.
Then let me that moſt wonderful of cures
Recall, which once my Sire performed for Yours.

" Sick lay the King and dangerouſly ill;
He muſt have died, but for my Father's ſkill.
Who ſay then, Sire, that neither he nor I

Have e'er done ſervice to Your Majeſty,
Not only ſpeak the thing that is not true,
But utter a groſs calumny on You.

" Forgive me, Sir, nor deem my tongue too bold.
With Your good leave that tale I will unfold.
My Sire was known, as far as Fame could reach,
To be a learned and a ſkilful Leech.
All diagnoſtics of diſeaſe he knew,
Judged by a Patient's pulſe, and water too;
Could heal an injury in any part,
And aided Nature with his wondrous Art.
Emetics of all kinds he underſtood,
And what was cool and thinning for the blood.
With ſkill and ſafety could he breathe a vein,
And draw a tooth without the ſlighteſt pain.
You will not, Sire, remember this the leaſt,
For You were then a Suckling at the breaſt.
'Twas when drear Winter's pall the earth o'erſpread,
Sick lay Your Father and confined to bed;
So ſadly weak that he could not ſtir out;
They were obliged to carry him about.
All who could medicine were bade to come,
From ev'ry ſpot between this Court and Rome.

Not One of them encouraged any hope;
But All, without exception, gave him up.
Then my poor Father they called in at laſt,
Though not till ev'ry chance of cure ſeemed paſt.
He felt the Monarch's pulſe, and ſhook his head;
'May the King live for ever!' then he ſaid;
'Though much I fear he hath not long to live:
'To ſave his life, mine own I'd gladly give.
'The contents of yon vaſe let me inſpect,
'To ſee what miſchief I may there detect.'
'Do as he bids;' the King ſaid to the Nurſe;
'Do what you will; I'm getting worſe and worſe.'
" Upon the Mirror's rim was fair engraved
The mode in which Your Sire by mine was ſaved.
The contents of the veſſel they had brought
My Sire examined, with reflective thought;
Then ſaid; 'To ſave Your health is but one way;
'And that will not admit the leaſt delay:
'Your life is gone, unleſs, within the hour,
'The liver of a Wolf you ſhall devour;
'He muſt too, at the leaſt, be ſev'n years old;
'And you muſt eat it, Sire, ere it be cold.
'All ſcruples on the point muſt be withſtood;

'The water here is thick and red as blood.'
It chanced the Wolf was ſtanding near the bed,
And with diſguſt heard all my Father ſaid.
To him with feeble voice the Monarch ſpake;
'You hear, Sir Wolf, the phyſic I muſt take.
'Quick, then, about it! to effect my cure,
'You will not grudge your liver, I am ſure.'
'Of no uſe mine would be;' the Wolf replied,
'I am but five years old next Lammas-tide.'
'Nonſenſe!' my Father cried; 'we ſoon ſhall ſee;
'For we muſt lay you open inſtantly.'
Off to the kitchen then the Wolf was brought;
And out they cut his liver, quick as thought.
'Twas diſhed up ſmoking on a ſilver plate,
And by Your Royal Father eaten ſtraight.
From that ſame hour he was quite cured and well;
Reſtored to health as by a miracle.
What gratitude the King, Your Father, ſhewed;
The ſtyle of Doctor He on mine beſtowed:
At Court none dared this title to neglect,
Or treat him with the ſlighteſt diſreſpect.
Before th' aſſembled Peers he wore a cap
Of crimſon velvet, with a golden ſnap;

His place was ever at the King's right hand,
And honored was by All throughout the land.
" Of his poor Son how diff'rent is the lot!
The Father's virtues now are all forgot.
The greedieſt Rogues are now advanced to pow'r,
Who only ſeek for what they may devour.
Int'reſt and Gain are thought of now alone,
And Right and Juſtice but by name are known.
Great Lords are thoſe, who Servants were before,
And without mercy grind the ſuff'ring Poor:
Blindly they ſtrike their former Mates among,
Nor heed the leaſt the ranks from whence they
ſprung.
Their own advantage their ſole end and aim,
They ſtill contrive to win, whate'er the game.
'Tis ſuch as theſe that on the Wealthy fix,
Their flatt'ry choking All on whom it ſticks:
No man's petition will they ever heed,
If not by coſtly gifts accompanied:
By rapine and extortion ſtill they live,
And, like the Horſe-leech, ever cry, 'Give! give!'
" Such greedy Wolves as theſe, the choice tit-bits
Would always keep, as their own perquiſites:

When a prompt ſacrifice their King might ſave,
Time for reflection they will ever crave.
You ſee how, in this caſe, the Wolf preferr'd
To ſave his liver, rather than his Lord;
And what a liver too! The ſelfiſh Brute!
For I without reſerve will ſpeak my thought.
In ought that danger to the King involves,
What ſignifies the death of twenty Wolves?
Nay, without loſs, the whole Tribe might be ſlain,
So but the King and Queen their lives retain.
None ſeek pure water from a puddled ſource,
Or from a Sow's ear make a ſilken purſe.
No doubt, Sire, You the whole affair forget;
For You were much too young to notice it:
I'm ſure though of the truth of what I ſay,
As though it happened only yeſterday.

" 'Graved on the Mirror all this ſtory ſtood;
For 'twas my Father's ſpecial wiſh it ſhould.
Fair was the work and beauteous to behold,
Adorned with jewels, and inlaid with gold.
Oh! for the chance to get that Mirror back,
Fortune and life how gladly would I ſtake!"

" Reynard!" ſaid Noble, " I your ſpeech have heard,

And all your tales and fables, ev'ry word.
Your Father may have been both good and great,
And haply did vaſt ſervice to the State:—
It muſt have happened a long time ago;
I never heard one word of it till now.
But of your evil deeds I learn each day;
Your ſport is death; ſo all My People ſay.
If theſe are but old tales, as you declare,
Strange that no good of you e'er meets mine ear."

"Sire!" ſaid the Fox, "allow me to explain.
What You have ſaid has cauſed me deepeſt pain.
To you no good I e'er have done, You ſtate;—
But not a word will I retaliate:
Forbid it, Heaven! for full well, I know,
To You the ſervice of my life I owe.

"Permit me one adventure to repeat,
Which I am certain You will not forget.
If'grim and I once chanced a Boar to hunt;
We caught him ſoon; good Saints! how he did
grunt!
You came, and much of hunger You complain'd,
And ſaid Your Spouſe was foll'wing cloſe behind:—
If we would Each give up a little bit,

We ſhould on Both confer a benefit;
A portion of our booty we might ſpare;
And If'grim anſwered, 'Yes;'—with ſuch an air;
While all the while between his teeth he muttered,
So that one could not hear a word he uttered.
Said I, 'Sire! have Your wiſh! I but deplore
'Inſtead of one Swine we have not a ſcore.
Say, Which of us the booty ſhall divide?'
'The Wolf!' You then with dignity replied.
Well pleaſed was If'grim, and with ſhameleſs front,
'Gan to divide, according to his wont.
One quarter, Sire, he placed aſide for You;
Another, to Your Royal Spouſe as due;
The other half he claimed as his own ſhare,
And greedily began the fleſh to tear;
My humble part, beſide the ears and ſnout,
Was half the lungs, and that was all I got;
And all the reſt he kept himſelf; to us
In ſooth he was not over-generous.
Your portion ſoon was gone; but I perceived
Your appetite was by no means relieved.
Ifegrim though, juſt like a greedy Beaſt,
Pretended not to ſee it in the leaſt;



REYNARD THE FOX

London, William Pickering

Continuing ſtill to gnaw and champ and chew,
Nor offered, Sire, the ſmalleſt bit to You.
But then Your Royal paws did You uprear,
And ſmite him heavily behind the ear;
It tore his ſkin, and ſwift away he fled,
Howling like mad, with bald and bleeding head.
'Thou blund'ring Glutton!' after him You cried,
'I'll teach thee how thy booty to divide:
'Hence! quick! go fetch Us ſomething more to eat!'
Then I ſaid, Sire,—You ſhould not want for meat;
I'd follow quickly upon Iſ'grim's track,
And I'd be bound, we'd ſoon bring ſomething back.
And You were pleaſed to ſay, You were content;
So after Iſegrim with ſpeed I went.
He ſhewed his wound, and grumbled bitterly;
But I perſuaded him to hunt with me.
We fell in with a Calf, which we purſued,
And caught him; 'twas, I knew, Your fav'rite food;
We brought and laid it at Your Royal feet;
It was an off'ring for a Monarch meet;
You ſaw 'twas fat, and to reward our toil,
With gracious condeſcenſion deigned to ſmile;
And many a kindly word to me You ſpoke,

And ſaid my hunting always brought good luck;
Adding, ‘ Now, Reynard, *you* divide the Calf.’
I anſwered, ‘ Sire, to You belongs one half;
‘ That, with Your leave, I place aſide for You;
‘ The other to Your Royal Spouſe is due;
‘ The entrails, ſuch as liver, heart and lungs,
‘ All this to your dear Children, Sire, belongs:
‘ I’ll take the feet, for thoſe I love to gnaw;
‘ And with the head the Wolf may cram his maw.’
Then, did You thus addreſs me; ‘ Where, I pray,
‘ Learnt you to carve in ſuch a courtly way?’
‘ Yonder my Teacher ſtands, my Liege;’ I ſaid;
‘ The Greedy Wolf, with bald and bleeding head.
‘ Had I not learnt, it were indeed a ſhame;
‘ For, Swine or Calf, the principle’s the ſame.’

“ Thus pain and ſorrow did the Wolf befall;
And ſure his greedineſs deſerved it all.
Alas! there are too many of the kind;
To ſacrifice all elſe to Self inclin’d.
Their conſtant thoughts all bent in one direction,
They grind their Vaſſals, calling it ‘ Protection.’
The Poor perchance are ſtarved, but what care they?
Ah! wretched is the land that owns their ſway!

Far otherwiſe, mine honored Liege, You ſee,
That You have always been eſteemed by me;
All that I ever either reap or glean
I dedicate to You and to my Queen.
Whate'er I chance to gain, or great or ſmall,
You ſurely have the largeſt ſhare of all.
Think of this ſtory of the Calf and Swine;
Then judge to whom reward You ſhould aſſign.
But ah! poor Reynard's merits have grown dim;
All favors now are heaped on Iſegrim!
All muſt ſubmit perforce to his commands;
All tribute paſs through his tenacious hands.
But little for Your int'reſt doth he care,
Not e'en content with half for his own ſhare.
You heed alone what he and Bruin ſay,
While Reynard's wiſeſt words are thrown away.

" But now I am accuſed and ſhall not budge;
I know I ſtand before an upright Judge.
Let whoſo will, bring forth what charge he pleaſe,
Let him bring forward too his Witneſſes;
And pledge, upon the iſſue of the ſtrife,
As I will do, his wealth, his ears, his life.
Such were the law and practice heretofore;

To theſe I now appeal, and aſk no more."
" Happen what may," then ſaid the King, "by me
The path of Juſtice ſhall not ſtraitened be.
Though thou art tainted, by Suſpicion's breath,
To have a hand in gentle Puſs's death—
My truſty Meſſenger! I loved him well;
And mourned his loſs, far more than tongue can tell!
How did I grieve when I the Beaver ſaw
That bleeding head from out thy wallet draw!
His crime the Ram atoned for on the ſpot;
But thou haſt leave to fight the matter out.—
" We pardon Reynard's treaſons 'gainſt the
Crown,
For many ſervices which he hath done.
If Any aught againſt him have to ſay,
Let him ſtand forth and prove it as he may;
Or by ſworn Witneſſes, or elſe by fight;
For here ſtands Reynard to defend his Right."
Then thus the Fox replied; " My gracious Lord!
My humbleſt thanks are all I can afford.
To ev'ry one You freely lend an ear;
And e'en the Meaneſt meet with Juſtice here.
Heav'n is my witneſs, with how ſad a heart

I ſuffered Puſs and Bellyn to depart;
Some ſtrange foreboding of their fate had I;
For oh! I loved them both right tenderly."
Thus cunningly did Reynard play his game;
Thus artfully his endleſs fables frame.
Another triumph thus his wit achieved,
For he again by All was quite believed.
He ſpake with ſo much earneſtneſs, in ſooth,
It was ſcarce poſſible to doubt his truth.
Some with him even for his loſs condoled;
And thus once more his Sov'reign he cajoled.
The ſtory of the trinkets pleaſed the King;
He longed to have them, 'ſpecially the Ring;
He ſaid to Reynard, "Go, in peace of mind,
Go, and ſeek, far and near, the Loſt to find.
Do all you can; more will I not require;
My aid you may obtain, when you deſire."
"Thanks, Sire;" ſaid Reynard, "for this act
of Grace;
Now, in my heart, Deſpair to Hope gives place.
To puniſh Crime, and Falſehood to refute,
This is, my Liege, Your nobleſt Attribute.
Though Darkneſs ſtill the whole affair enſhrouds,

Ere long ſhall Light diſpel the murky clouds.
The queſt forthwith, Sire, will I expedite,
Inceſſantly will travel, day and night;
And when I find the Treaſures which I ſeek,
If to retake them I ſhould prove too weak,
Then will I venture that kind aid to pray,
Which You have offered graciouſly this day.
Ah! let me at Your feet but lay them down,
Repaid ſhall be my toil; my loyal truth made
known"

The Monarch ſeemed well pleaſed to be deceived,
And all the Court as readily believed;
So cleverly the Fox his falſehoods wove,
That what he only ſaid, he ſeemed to prove.
And Reynard's mind was wonderfully eaſed,
For he was free to wander where he pleaſed.

But If'grim could his wrath no more reſtrain;
He gnaſhed his teeth and thus began complain;
"My Liege, and can You once more yield belief
To this thrice damned Perjurer and Thief?
Perceive You not, Sire, that in boaſting thus,
He but deludeth You and beardeth us?
Truth doth he from his very ſoul deſpiſe;

And all his wit is ſpent in feigning lies.
But I'll not let him off ſo lightly now;
What a falſe Knave he is I ſoon ſhall ſhew;
Him of three grievous crimes I now indict;
And 'ſcape he ſhall not, even ſhould we fight.
He talks of calling Witneſſes forſooth;—
As though that were the way to get the Truth!
They might ſtand here and witneſs all the day;
He'd manage to explain their words away;
And there might be no Witneſſes at times;
Should therefore all unpuniſhed be his crimes?
But who will dare the Culprit to accuſe,
When he is ſure his time and ſuit to loſe;
And from that time for ever, wrong or right,
Be a marked object for the Ruffian's ſpite?
E'en You Yourſelf, Sire, by experience know,
As well as we, what miſchief he can do.
To day I have him ſafe; he cannot flee;
So let him look to't; he ſhall anſwer me!"

REYNARD THE FOX

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH

THE DEFIANCE

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

THUS Iſegrim, the Wolf, commenced his plaint;
Though words would fail his mighty rage to paint;
" My Liege, this Reynard is a Scoundrel ſtill,
He ever has been one, and ever will.
And there he ſtands, and dares my wrath defy,
Sland'ring myſelf and all my Family.
My black Beaſt has he ever been, through life!
What endleſs Evils has he wrought my Wife!
He once contrived the poor Thing to perſuade
Into a mill-pond through a bog to wade.
He promiſed ſhe ſhould gratify her wiſh,
And catch that day a multitude of Fiſh;
She'd but to ſlip her tail into the pond,
And leave it hanging cloſe upon the ground;
Faſt would the Fiſhes fix; ſhe'd ſoon take more

Than Three beſides herſelf could well devour.
Partly ſhe waded on, and partly ſwam,
Till to the ſluice ſhe got beneath the dam:
There, where the waters ſtood moſt ſtill and deep,
Should ſhe her tail drop down, and quiet keep.
Tow'rds ev'ning-tide there came a nipping breeze,
And bitterly did it begin to freeze;
She had not borne it long; but, in a trice,
Her tail was fairly frozen in the ice.
She thought 'twas owing to the Fiſhes' weight
She could not move it, and that all was right.
Reynard perceived her caſe,—the Reprobate!—
And then—but what he did I dare not ſtate—
He ſhall not now eſcape me, by mine oath!
That outrage coſts the life of One or Both!
Prate as he will, he'll not impoſe on me;
Nor ſhall his lying tongue now ſet him free!
I caught him in the very act, I ſay—
It was the mereſt chance I paſſed that way—
I heard her cry, the poor deluded One!
Faſt was ſhe fixed there, and defence had none.
I came, and with my own eyes ſaw a fight—
Oh Heav'ns! why did my heart not break outright?

'Reynard! what art thou doing there?' I cried;
He heard me, and away the Coward hied.
I haſtened to the ſpot in grief and wrath,
Slipping and ſlith'ring on the glaſſy path.
Ne'er had I greater trouble in my life,
Than then, to break the ice and free my Wife.
But my beſt efforts did not quite avail;
She was obliged, poor Soul! to tug and hale;
And left behind a fourth part of her tail.
Loudly ſhe howled, and long; ſome Peaſants near
Her cries of bitter anguiſh chanced to hear.
They hurried thither, and ſoon ſpied us out,
And to each other 'gan to bawl and ſhout;
Acroſs the narrow dam in haſte they ſwarmed,
With ſpades and mattocks, pikes and axes armed;
The Womankind with ſpindles; how they
ſcreamed and ſtormed!
'Catch them and kill them! curſe them!' One and
All
Thus to each other did they loudly call.
Such deep alarm I never felt before,
Nor my poor Gieremund, till that ſad hour.
We ſaved our lives, though with the greateſt pain,

And had to run till our hides ſmoked again.
There was one Fellow,—curſes on his Soul!
Armed with a long and iron-headed pole,
Who, light of foot, kept foll'wing in our track,
For ever poking at my ſides and back.
Had not the night approached with friendly gloom,
We from that ſpot alive had never come.
And what a hubbub did the Women keep!
Swearing, the Hags! we had devoured their Sheep.
As they were armed with neither pikes nor prongs,
They tried to wound us with their ſpiteful tongues.
We tow'rds the water took our courſe again,
And crept among the ſedges in the fen.
The Hinds dared not in this purſuit embark,
For luckily it now had grown pitch dark;
So they returned, ſore diſappointed, home;
And thus we juſt eſcaped our threatened doom.

"You ſee, my Liege, how grave was this offence;
A meſh of treachery and violence.
Such crimes Your love of juſtice muſt condemn;
For None are ſafe unleſs You puniſh them."

The King heard this complaint with patient ear;
Then ſaid, "Be ſure you ſhall have juſtice here;

Her rights are ever ſacred, come what may :
But We will hear what Reynard has to ſay."
The Fox replied; " If true this tale were found,
Much to my credit would it not redound;
The charge is grave; but gracious Heav'n forbid,
I e'er ſhould act as If'grim ſays I did.
All I have done was at his Wife's own wiſh:
I don't deny I taught her to take Fiſh;
I told her where they would abound, and ſhew'd
How ſhe might get there by the neareſt road.
But ſoon as ever of the Fiſh I ſpoke,
With greedy haſte, away from me ſhe broke;
Without reflection hurried to the ſpot,
And all my rules and cautions quite forgot.
Then if ſhe happened to get frozen in,
From ſitting there ſo long it muſt have been;
Had ſhe but pulled her tail more quickly out,
She'd have got Fiſh enough, I make no doubt.
But Gluttony, a vice to be abhorr'd,
Like Virtue, often brings its own reward.
The heart that never will be ſatisfied
Muſt needs oft prove a drear and aching void.
Whoſo the Spirit hath of Greedineſs

Will lead a life of trouble and diſtreſs;
Him nothing ſatisfies: this, Gieremund,
When frozen in, by ſad experience found.
" And thus it is my trouble is repaid!
Thus am I thanked for all my honeſt aid!
I ſhoved and ſtrove my beſt to ſet her free;
But much too heavy for my ſtrength was ſhe.
While in this charitable act engaged,
Came Iſegrim, and furiouſly he raged;
He had, it ſeems, been prowling round the ſhore;
And there he ſtood, and fiercely curſed and ſwore;
I never heard ſuch rude and ſavage tones;
They made my fleſh quite creep upon my bones;
Once, twice and thrice, at my poor head he hurl'd
The wildeſt execrations in the world.
Thinks I then to myſelf, ' It ſeems to me
' My ſafeſt courſe at once to fly will be;
' For it were better ſure to run away
' Than to this jealous Madman fall a prey.'
And well it was I fled, or, by my faith!
Beyond a doubt I had been torn to death.
When two Dogs fight together o'er a bone,
The victory can but remain to one.

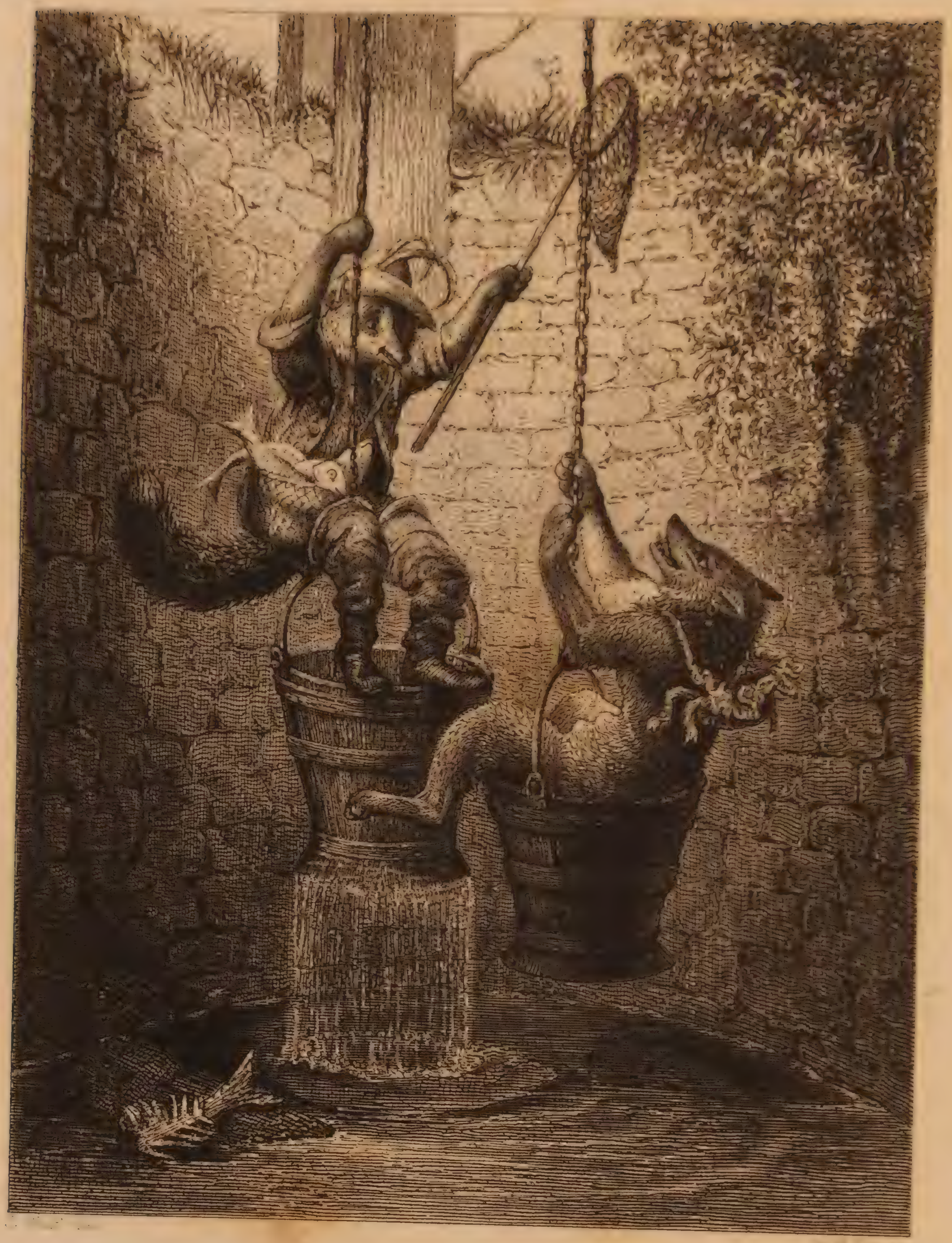
I thought it therefore far the ſafer courſe
To flee his anger and his brutal force.
For that he is a Brute he can't deny ;
Aſk his own Wife ; ſhe knows as well as I ;
Aſk her, and ſhe no doubt will anſwer true.
With him, the Liar ! what have I to do ?

" When he perceived his Wife in ſuch a plight,
No doubt he went to help her ; well he might.
If by the peaſant Rabble they were preſs'd,
I gueſs it happened really for the beſt ;
It cannot but have done the She-Wolf good,
Have ſtirred her ſinews, and have thawed her blood.
'Tis truly infamous, upon my life,
To hear him now ſo ſcandalize his Wife.
But aſk herſelf ; think ye, if truth he ſpoke,
She would not vengeance on my head invoke.

" Meanwhile a week's imparlance will I crave,
Means to conſult my Friends that I may have ;
And ſee what anſwer it were beſt to frame,
To meet the Wolf's abſurd and groundleſs claim."

" Nothing but Rogu'ry," anſwered Gieremund,
" In all you ſay and do is ever found ;
Tricks, treaſons, treach'ry, ſtratagems and lies,—

Falſehood, in ſhort, in ev'ry ſhape and guiſe.
Who truſts your glozing and deceitful tongue,
For his credulity will ſuffer long.
This no one better than myſelf can tell;
Witneſs what happened lately at the well.
" Two buckets there were hanging; you in one—
Wherefore I knew not—had yourſelf let down;
And nohow able to get up again,
Of your poſition loudly did complain.
At morning to the ſpot I chanced repair
And aſked you what you could be doing there;
You anſwered, ' Couſin dear, come down here too;
' There's no good luck I would not ſhare with you.
' Get in the bucket and deſcend with ſpeed;
' Of Fiſh I promiſe you a glorious feed.'
" It was ſome Demon led me, ſure, that way,
And made me credit what you pleaſed to ſay;
I to your oaths ſhould ne'er have truſted more;
Well do I recollect what oaths you ſwore:
Not only that of Fiſh you'd had your fill,
But you had even ate till you were ill.
My ſympathy my judgment over-ruled;—
Aſs that I was to let myſelf be fooled!



REYNARD THE FOX

" Into the bucket did I thoughtleſs get;
And down it went; the other mounting ſtraight;
And we about midway together met.
Aſtoniſhed and alarmed, I called to you;
' In Heaven's name, where am I going to?'
' Here we go up and down!' you anſwered thus;
' So goes it in the world, and ſo with us.
' Nor let it be a ſubject of ſurpriſe;
' By our own merits we muſt fall or riſe.'
Safe mounted, on the edge you lightly ſtepp'd
Out of your bucket, and away you leapt;
While at the bottom of the well I lay,
In ſad diſtreſs of mind, the livelong day,
And ſuffered endleſs blows before I got away.

" Some Boors came to the well at eventide,
Nor was it long before poor Me they ſpied;
Piteous indeed was my unhappy ſtate,
As, cold and wet and hungry, there I ſate.
Then to each other ſaid the Boors; ' Hallo!
' See! in yon bucket ſits our ancient Foe!
' The Thief, from whom we nothing ſafe can keep;
' Who eats our Kidlings and devours our Sheep!'
' Juſt pull him up!' ſaid One; ' I'll wait for him;

'And he ſhall catch it, when he reach the brim.'
'He for our Sheep ſhall pay!' Another ſaid:—
I think the debts of all my Tribe I paid.
Blows upon blows fell on me, thick and faſt;
A ſadder hour than that I never paſt;
I deemed each moment muſt have been my laſt."

Then Reynard anſwered; "If you but reflect,
Thoſe blows, you'll own, had all a good effect.
For mine own part, I honeſtly admit
They'd not have ſuited with my taſte a bit;
And as the matter ſtood, you ſee quite well,
For Both to 'ſcape had not been poſſible.
To cenſure me is anything but juſt:
In ſuch a caſe you'll ne'er Another truſt:
A leſſon for the future let it be;—
The World you know is full of roguery."

"Now," ſaid the Wolf, "what need of further proof?
From this vile Traitor have I borne enough.
Of yet another outrage I complain;
The marks whereof I even ſtill retain.
Through him I got into the worſt of ſcrapes,
In Saxony, among a brood of Apes.

Induced by him I went into the lair;
He knew what miſchief I ſhould meet with there.
Had I not fled with timely haſte away,
Both eyes and ears I ſhould have loſt that day.
But with his lying tongue he told me firſt—
Ah! be that lying tongue for ever curſt!—
That I ſhould find his Lady Aunt within;
Dame Ruckenaw I fancied he muſt mean.
Of me he wiſhed, I doubt not, to be rid,
And grieved I got away, e'en as I did.
He ſent me down, the ſly and juggling Elf!
Into that horrid neſt;—I thought 'twas Hell itſelf."

Reynard replied before th' aſſembled Lords,
Malicious meaning lurking in his words;
" To pity Iſegrim I'm half inclin'd;
I doubt if he is in his perfect mind.
If this adventure he deſire to tell,
To ſtate it truly would be juſt as well.

" About three years ago, to Saxony,
With a vaſt ſtore of booty, travelled he;
I followed; ſo far truth I recognize
In what he ſtates; the reſt's a pack of lies.
And thoſe whoſe cruelty he now bemoans,

They were not Apes at all, but juſt Baboons.
With them no kinſhip have I ever claimed;
Of ſuch alliance I ſhould feel aſhamed.
Martin the Ape, and Ruckenaw his Spouſe,
They are my Kin, as Ev'rybody knows;
I honor him as Uncle, her as Aunt;
Of their affinity I well may vaunt:
He is a Notary, well verſed in law,
Can ſign his name, and proteſts deftly draw.
In what of thoſe vile Creatures If'grim ſpoke,
Your ſcorn at my expenſe he would provoke.
Relationſhip with them I quite repel;
For they are like the very Fiends of Hell.
If I then called the old Hag 'Aunt,' 'twas done
For prudent reaſons to myſelf beſt known:
I nothing loſt thereby, I fairly own.
Her honored Gueſt, I ſumptuouſly fared;
Or elſe ſhe might have choked, for aught I cared.
" You ſee, my Lords, Sir Iſegrim and I
Left the high-road and paſſed a mountain by.
A cavern in the rear we chanced to mark,
Deep it appeared, and long, and wondrous dark.
My Friend complained, as uſual, of a ſinking;—

He's got a Wolf inſide him, to my thinking;
For let him eat as much as e'er he will,
Who ever heard him own he'd had his fill?—
I ſaid to him; 'The Inmates of this cave
'Will certainly good ſtore of victuals have;
'I make no doubt they'll let us have a ſhare;
'Moſt ſeaſonable is our coming here.'
But Iſegrim replied, 'Go in and ſee;
'I'll wait for you meanwhile beneath this tree.
'Your ſocial talents no one can deny;
'You make Acquaintance eaſier far than I.
'Go in, good Coz; I'm ſure you'll be ſo good
'To call me, if you meet with any food.'
He wanted me to face the danger firſt;
It being more, the Daſtard! than he durſt.

" I entered; nor without a ſhudd'ring dread
Did I the long and ſinuous paſſage thread;
And what I ſaw—oh! not for worlds of gold,
Would I again that awful ſight behold!—
A neſt of ugly Monſters, great and ſmall,
And their Dam with them, uglieſt of them all.
With long black teeth briſtled her frightful jaws,
Her hands and feet with long and crooked claws,

A long and hairy tail behind ſhe bore;
Such a grim Wretch I never ſaw before!
Her ſwart, gaunt Children had the ſtrangeſt ſhapes,
And looked, for all the world, like goblin Apes.
She gazed upon me with an evil eye;
'Would I were ſafe out of this houſe!' thought I.
Than Iſegrim ſhe was a bigger Beaſt;
Some of her Young too were as big, at leaſt.
This horrible and hideous Brood I found
Bedded on rotten hay on the dank ground,
With filth all ſlobbered o'er. There oozed a ſmell
On ev'ry ſide them, as from pitch of Hell.
The honeſt truth to ſpeak, for I'll not lie,
I felt ſmall pleaſure in their company;
They were ſo many, and alone was I.
With mine own boſom then I counſel ſought,
How from this curſed place I might get out.
I greeted them with many a friendly word;
Although ſuch a deceit my ſoul abhorr'd;
But thought it juſt as prudent to be civil;—
E'en as I would be to the very Devil.
I called the old One, 'Aunt;' the young ones,
'Couſins,'

And gave them tender epithets by dozens.
‘ May gracious Heaven grant you lengthened days!’
Thus I began; ‘ and profper all your ways!
‘ Are theſe your Children? But I need not aſk;
‘ Their likeneſs it were difficult to maſk.
‘ I vow my very ſoul with joy it cheers,
‘ To ſee them look ſo well, the little Dears!
‘ So freſh and nice do you contrive to make ’em,
‘ Strangers might for the Royal Children take ’em.
‘ And grateful am I, as I ought to be,
‘ That you ſhould thus augment our Family,
‘ And graft ſuch worthy ſcions on our tree.
‘ Who has ſuch Kinsfolk is moſt bleſt indeed;
‘ For they may aid him in the hour of need.’
As thus lip-honor forth to her I dealt,
Far different, in truth, from what I felt,
She, on her ſide, of me made much ado;
Was very civil; called me, ‘ Nephew,’ too;
Although the old Fool knew, as well as I,
She bore no kinſhip to my Family.
I thought, to call her, ‘ Aunt,’ was no great crime;
Albeit with fear I ſweated all the time.
With kindlieſt words by her was I addreſſ’d;

‘ Reynard, dear Kinſman! welcome, as my Gueſt!
‘ ’Tis very good of you, that I will ſay,
‘ To drop in on us in this friendly way.
‘ From your inſtructions ſhall my Children gain
‘ The ſkill how they to honor may attain.’
Her Courteſy thus did I cheaply earn;
A trifling ſacrifice juſt ſerved my turn;
Claiming her kin, though ſhe was ſo uncouth,
And holding back ſome diſagreeable truth.
Moſt gladly would I then have gone away;
But ſhe entreated me that I would ſtay;
‘ So ſhort a viſit ſurely you’ll not make;
‘ At leaſt ſome ſlight refreſhment you will take:’
And ſaying thus, ſhe brought me heaps of food,
More than I might deſcribe, all freſh and good;
Fiſh, ven’ſon, wild-fowl and all ſorts of game;—
Much did I wonder whence the Deuce it came.
Of all theſe to my heart’s content I ate,
And heartily enjoyed the bounteous treat.
And even when I’d had my utmoſt fill,
She kept on urging me to take more ſtill:—
For Some there are ſo over-hoſpitable,
Would force their Gueſts eat more than they are
able.—

A joint of fine buck ven'ſon then brought ſhe
A preſent for my Wife and Family.
I thanked her, as behoved me, for her cheer;
She was all gracious; called me 'Couſin dear;'
And ſaid, 'I hope to ſee you often here.'
I promiſed all ſhe aſked; indeed I would
Have promiſed anything, as matters ſtood.

"At length I managed to get ſafely off,
Without an accident, and pleaſed enough;
For nothing found I there, you may ſuppoſe,
Either to gratify the eyes or noſe.
Through the dark gall'ries did I ſwiftly flee,
And haſtened to the op'ning by the tree:
There on the greenſward Iſegrim ſtill lay,
Sighing and groaning in a grievous way.
'How fares it with you, Uncle mine?' I cried;
'Ah! nearly dead with hunger;' he replied.
I pitied him, and juſt his life to ſave,
The meat I brought to him I freely gave.
He ate it up with grateful gluttony;
Though now he has forgotten all, you ſee.
His meal concluded, he deſired to know,
Who were the Dwellers in the cave below:

'What ſort of Folk are they down there?' he ſaid;
'And was your entertainment good or bad?'
I told him juſt the pure and naked truth;
The neſt was vile, the Inmates moſt uncouth;
In manners wild, uncourteous and rough;
To make amends though, there was food enough:
And if he wiſhed himſelf to have a ſhare,
He'd nought to do but enter boldly there;
Only he muſt be mindful Truth to ſpare.
'Though Falſehood is almoſt the worſt of crimes,
'Truth is not to be ſpoken at all times.'
This I repeated to him o'er and o'er,
And added ſev'ral ſage inſtructions more:
'He who unwiſely ſwagg'ring about Truth,
'Has it for ever wobbling in his mouth,
'Is ſure to meet with endleſs grief and woe,
'And perſecution whereſoe'er he go;
'Others careſſed and proſp'rous ſhall he find;
'While he in ev'ry place will lag behind.'
I fully warned him what he might expect,
If he theſe warnings madly ſhould neglect:
'He who but ſpeaks what Others like to hear
'Is ſure to be reſpected far and near.'

" Theſe are the very words, Sire, that I ſpake,
Both for his guidance, and my conſcience' ſake:
But if he choſe to act quite contrary
And ſuffer'd for it, who to blame but he?
His locks with age are grizzled, but 'tis plain
One ſeeks for judgment under them in vain.
Such ſtupid Brutes on bluntneſs lay a ſtreſs,
And diſregard all prudence and fineſſe;
And, groping underground with mole-like eyes,
Affect the light of Wiſdom to deſpiſe.
The ſole advice I preſſed on him, forſooth,
Was not to be too ſpendthrift of the Truth:
He rudely anſwered, ' I ſhould think I know
' How to behave, at leaſt as well as you.'
Into the cave then did he boldly trot;
And you ſhall hear what welcome there he got.

" He finds the frightful Dam within her lair,
Like ſome old dotard Devil crouching there:
The young ones too! With terror and ſurpriſe,
' Help! help! what hideous Beaſts!' he wildly cries;
' Are theſe your Offspring, pray? Faugh! how they
ſmell!
' Worſe than the ſlime-engendered Spawn of Hell!

‘ Take them and drown them!—that is all they’re
worth;—
‘ Left the unclean Brood overrun the earth!
‘ An they were mine, I’d have them throttled
ſtraight;
‘ To catch young Devils they might ſerve as bait;
‘ One need but take them down to ſome bog’s edge,
‘ And let them hang there, faſtened to the ſedge.
‘ Bog-apes indeed! it is a name that ſuits
‘ Their nature well, the naſty, dirty Brutes!’
The outraged Mother anſwered with a ſhriek,
For haſte and anger ſcarce would let her ſpeak;
‘ What Devil ſent this bouncing Knave to us?
‘ In my own houſe to be inſulted thus!
‘ The vulgar Ruffian! My poor Children too!
‘ Ugly or handſome, what is that to you?
‘ Reynard the Fox, with fifty times your ſenſe,
‘ A man of knowledge and experience,
‘ Has only juſt now left us; he avow’d
‘ My Young were handſome, and their manners
good;
‘ Nay e’en to call them Couſins he was proud.
‘ A ſhort time back, and in this very place,

‘ All this he ſtated frankly to my face.
‘ If you they do not pleaſe, as they did him,
‘ Remember you came here of your own whim;
‘ Nobody aſked you, Gaffer Iſegrim !’
But he demanded food of her, and ſaid;
‘ Bring it at once, or I your ſearch may aid;
‘ I cannot ſtand your vanity to pleaſe.’—
With that he ſtrove upon her ſtore to ſeize.
Not prudent was the thought, or wiſe the deed;
But little did he all my cautions heed.
Upon him, quick as thought, herſelf ſhe threw,
And bit and ſcratched him, that the blood ſhe drew.
Her children too were all as wood as ſhe,
And tore and clawed and mauled him fearfully.
He did not dare return their blows again;
But howled and ſcreamed in agony of pain.
He ſought,—the only chance his life to ſave—
With haſty ſteps, the op’ning of the cave.
“ I ſaw him come, with mangled cheeks and lips,
His torn hide hanging down in gory ſtrips;
One ear was ſplit and bloody was his noſe;
He looked, in ſhort, one wound from head to toes.
I aſked, for his condition moved my ruth,

'You ſurely have not gone and ſpoke the Truth?'
But he replied; 'I ſaid juſt what I thought.—
'Oh! to what ſad diſgrace have I been brought!
'The ugly Witch! Ah, would I had her here!
'I'd make her pay, for my diſhonor, dear!
'What think you, Reynard? Have you ever ſeen
'So vile a Brood; ſo naſty and obſcene?
'I told her ſo, and ſurely I did right;
'But ſtraight I loſt all favor in her ſight.
'I came but badly off, upon my ſoul!
'Would I had never ſeen the curſed hole!'
Then anſwered I; 'You muſt be mad, I ſwear;
'How widely diff'rent my inſtructions were;
''Your Servant, deareſt Aunt,' you ſhould have
ſaid,—
'It never injures one to ſeem well-bred;—
''The world, I hope, goes ever well with you,
''And your ſweet darling little Children too.
''The joy I feel is more than I can tell
''To ſee you looking all ſo nice and well.''—
But Iſegrim impatiently broke in;
'What! call that Bitch my Aunt! thoſe Cubs my
Kin!

‘ The Devil may make off with all the Fry;
‘ He their relationſhip may claim, not I!
‘ Faugh! but they are a foul and filthy race!
‘ Ne’er again may I meet them, face to face!’
“ Such were his actions, ſuch was his reward;
Judge then if I betrayed him, good my Lord.
He can’t deny that what I’ve ſaid is true;
At leaſt ’twill not much help him if he do.”
Then Iſegrim replied with wrathful tongue,
His breaſt with ſenſe of deep injuſtice wrung;
“ What boots this idle war of angry words?
Can we decide our feud with woman’s ſwords?
Right ſtill is Right, whate’er the Bad pretend;
And he who hath it keeps it to the end.
Reynard now bears himſelf as vauntingly
As though the Right were his; but we ſhall ſee.
“ With me you ſhall do battel; thus alone
On which ſide truth is marſhalled ſhall be known.
A pretty tale forſooth is this you tell
Of our adventure at the She-ape’s cell;
That I was ſtarving and was fed by you!
But in what manner gladly would I know:
For what you brought me was juſt nought but bone;

You beſt yourſelf know where the fleſh was gone.
And there you boldly ſtand, and flout and jeer—
By Heav'n! but this doth touch mine honor near!
Suſpicions vile your falſe and ſland'rous tongue
On my good name and loyalty hath flung;
That I, devoid of 'legiance and faith,
Had compaſſed and imagined my King's death:
While you to Him with idle fables prate
Of ſtores and treaſures, at a ſhameleſs rate.
Treaſures and ſtores, forſooth! to my poor mind,
Such wonders will be ſomewhat hard to find.
But what doth moſt my vengeful wrath arouſe
Is the deep ſhame you've done my deareſt Spouſe.
" For all theſe grievances, both old and new,
I will do battel to the death with you.
Here to your face do I proclaim you are
A Traitor vile, a Thief, a Murderer;
And I will make it good, life againſt life;
And thus, and not by chiding, end our ſtrife.
What I avouch, I am prepared to prove;
Whereof in token here I fling my glove:
Thus formally the battel do I wage;
Stoop then if you have heart, and lift my gage.

My Sov'reign Liege and all th' aſſembled Lords
Have heard and know the import of my words;
They will aſſiſt this trial of the Right,
As Witneſſes of our judicial fight.
But you ſhall not eſcape me anyhow,
Until our feud is ſettled; that I vow!"

Then with himſelf did Reynard counſel take;
'Fortune and life are now indeed at ſtake:
'For big and ſtrong is he; I, weak and ſmall;
'Twere ſad if ill mine efforts now befall;
'Vain then were all my cunning and my ſkill;
'Yet will I hope a good concluſion ſtill.
'Of ſome advantage I may fairly boaſt;
'Since his fore-claws he hath but lately loſt:
'And, in the end, unleſs his paſſion cool,
'He may perchance be foiled, preſumptuous Fool!'

Then to the Wolf he boldly thus ſpake out;
"I ſtuff the Traitor's name back down your throat!
Charge upon charge againſt me you deviſe,
But I denounce them all as groundleſs lies.
You offer battel now, and haply think
That from the trial I in fear may ſhrink;
But long I've wiſhed this means my truth to prove;

The challenge I accept! Lo! here my glove!'
Then Noble, King of Beaſts, agreed to hold
The gages proffered by theſe Champions bold;
And ſaid, " Bring forth your Sureties now as bail
That at to-morrow's fight you ſhall not fail.
Both ſides I've heard, but underſtand no more—
Nay, leſs I may ſay—than I did before."

As If'grim's Sureties ſtood the Cat and Bear,
Tybalt and Bruin; thoſe for Reynard were
Greybeard and Monkie, Martin's Son and Heir.

To Reynard then thus ſpake Dame Ruckenaw;
" Coolneſs and Prudence now muſt be your law.
My Huſband, who is on his road to Rome,
Taught me a pray'r laſt time he was at home;
Good Abbot Gulpall did the ſame compoſe,
And gave it, as a favor, to my Spouſe.
He ſaid it was a pray'r of wond'rous might,
A ſaving ſpell for thoſe about to fight:
He who, the morning, this ſhould faſting hear,
Nor pain nor peril all that day need fear;
Vanquiſhed he could not be by any Foe,
Nor death nor wounds of any nature know.
This pray'r o'er you to-morrow will I ſay;
Then, Nephew dear, be jocund for to-day."

" Thanks, deareſt Aunt," ſaid Reynard, " for
your care;
Deeply beholden am I for your pray'r;
But moſtly do I truſt, and ever will,
The juſtice of my cauſe, and mine own ſkill."
All night his Friends remained with him, and
fought
With cheerful chat to ſcare each gloomy thought.
Dame Ruckenaw, more thoughtful than the reſt,
Was ever buſied how to ſerve him beſt.
From head to tail ſhe had him cloſely ſheared,
And then with fat and oil his body ſmeared;
He ſtood all ſmooth and ſleek from top to toe,
That he no grip ſhould offer to his Foe.
Then thus ſhe ſpake; " We muſt be circumſpect,
And on all chances of the fight reflect.
Hearken to my advice; a Friend in need,
Who gives good counſel, is a Friend indeed.
To-night, whate'er you do, before you ſleep,
Of light Liebfrauenmilch drink pottle-deep:
To-morrow, when you enter in the liſts—
Attend me well, herein the point conſiſts—
Wet well your bruſh—I need not tell you how—
Then fly upon your unſuſpecting Foe;

Laſh at his face, and ſalve him right i' th' eye;
His ſmarting ſight will darken inſtantly:
This cannot fail to cauſe him ſore diſtreſs,
And in the combat profit you no leſs.
Next muſt you take to flight, as though in fear;
He will be ſure to follow in your rear;
You will take heed to run againſt the wind,
While your ſwift feet kick up the duſt behind;
So ſhall his lids be cloſed with ſand and dirt;
Then on one ſide ſpring ſudden and alert;
And while he ſtops his ſmarting eyes to wipe,
Upon them deal another ſtinging ſtripe;
Thus, blinded, at your mercy ſhall he be,
And yours the undiſputed victory.

"Yourſelf to reſt now, deareſt Nephew, lay;
We will be ſure to wake you when 'tis day.
But firſt, as now the midnight hour is paſt,
Ere yet you ſlumber, and while ſtill you faſt,
Your heart to ſtrengthen, ſhould it chance be weak,
Thoſe ſacred words of power I'll o'er you ſpeak."

Then both her hands ſhe placed upon his head,
And with a ſolemn voice theſe words ſhe ſaid;
"*Tiw rof tfo ſeſſap hſir'bbig gnidnuos-hgih!*
Now ev'ry adverſe charm you may defy."

They laid him then to reſt beneath a tree;
And there he ſlept, both long and tranquilly.
Soon as the morning o'er the hill-tops brake,
The Beaver came his Kinſman to awake;
With him the Otter; greeting kind they gave;
Bade him ariſe, and bear him bold and brave;
And laughing ſaid, he had no need to ſhave.
The Otter brought with him a nice young duck,
And handing it to Reynard, thus he ſpoke;
" For this I've toiled, while you were faſt aſleep;
And it hath coſt me many a parlous leap;
I caught it at the mill near Huenerbrod;
Eat it, dear Coz; and may it do you good!"
" Gra'mercy for the handſel!" Reynard ſaid,
With cheerful heart as out he ſkipped from bed;
" So choice a preſent I would never ſlight;
I pray that Heav'n your kindneſs may requite."
He ate and drank unto his heart's content;
Then to the liſts with all his Friends he went;
Down to a ſandy level near a field,
Where the appointed combat ſhould be held.

REYNARD THE FOX

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH

THE BATTEL

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

WHEN Reynard thus before the throne
appeared,
Shorn of his hair, with oil and ointment
ſmeared;
The good King was ſo tickled with the ſight,
He could not chooſe but fairly laugh outright.
"Why, Fox, who taught thee ſuch a trick?"
he cried;
"As ſhave thy hair away, to ſave thy hide!
Reynard the Fox well may they chriſten thee,
For all thy life is full of foxery;
No matter how involved may be the ſcrape,
Thou'rt ſure to find ſome loop-hole for eſcape."
Low to the King, with reverential mien,
Bowed Reynard, and ſtill lower to the Queen;
Then gaily did he leap the liſts within,
Where waited Iſegrim with all his Kin;

Who prayed the Fox might find a ſhameful fate,
And ſhowered upon him words of threat'ning hate.
The Lynx and Libbard, Marſhals of the liſt,
Brought forth the holy relics in a cheſt;
The while, bare-headed ſtood the Champions both,
The Wolf and Fox, and took the wonted oath.
With many angry words and ſcowling looks,
Firſt Iſegrim the Wolf ſwore 'gainſt the Fox;
He was a Traitor, Murderer and Thief;
Guilty of ev'ry kind of crime, in brief;
Falſe unto him and outraging his Wife;
This he would prove againſt him, life for life.
Then Reynard ſwore, upon the other ſide,
That Iſegrim, the Wolf, moſt foully lied;
A Traitor and a Perjurer was he,
While he himſelf from ev'ry crime was free.
The doughty Marſhals then, ere they withdrew,
Bade both the Champions their devoir to do,
And truly keep the rules of lawful fight;
And Heav'n in juſtice would defend the Right;
The liſts then duly cleared of ev'ry one,
They left the Champions in the midſt alone.
To Reynard though Dame Ruckenaw drew near,

And, as ſhe paſſed, thus whiſpered in his ear;
" Remember, Nephew, the advice I gave;
My counſel follow, and your credit ſave."
To her, in cheerful tones, the Fox replies;
" My heart your kindly warning fortifies;
My wiles have carried me through many a ſcrape,
Through riſks of ev'ry kind and ev'ry ſhape;
Nor fear I but they ſhall aſſiſt me now
To baffle yonder fierce and ſavage Foe.
Shame upon him and his I look to heap,
While all my Friends ſhall fame and honor reap."
Now ſtand the Champions in the liſts alone,
While huſht and ſtill the anxious Crowd look on.
Wildly and ſavagely, with outſtretched claws,
With briſtling hair, and wide-diſtended jaws,
If'grim, the Wolf, the onſet firſt began,
And, ſwift as thought, at his Opponent ran.
The wily Fox dared not the charge abide,
But, light of foot, ſprang actively aſide;
Nor did he now his Aunt's advice forget;
His buſhy tail already had he wet;
On ev'ry ſide this did he whiſk and flirt,
And ſo beſmear it well with ſand and dirt.

Thought Iſegrim, ‘ I ſurely have him now ;’
But Reynard dealt him ſo ſevere a blow,
Acroſs his eyes, with his bedaggled tail,
That the Wolf’s ſight and hearing ’gan to fail.
’Twas not the only time this trick he’d played ;
Others this ſtinging ointment had eſſayed ;
Iſegrim’s Children he half blinded ſo,
As has been hinted at ſome time ago ;
And now he hoped to blind the Father too.
Having to If’grim’s eyes this ſalve applied ;
Again the wily Reynard ſprang aſide ;
And taking care to run againſt the wind,
He ſtirred a mighty cloud of duſt behind.
This filled the Wolf’s eyes, that they ſmarted ſore ;
The more he rubbed, they ſmarted all the more ;
And worſe he fared than he had done before.
Meanwhile the crafty Reynard did not fail
To ply with vigor his aſſiduous tail ;
Laſhing his Adverſary left and right,
Till wholly he deprived him of his ſight.
Faint he became, and dazed, and all confuſed :
The wary Fox quick his advantage uſed ;
Seeing what tears his ſtraining eye-balls wept,

On his unhappy Foe he fiercely leapt;
His hide, with teeth and talons, tore and gaſhed,
And ever with his tail his eyes he laſhed.
While If'grim, ſenſeleſs, gropes about, the Fox,
With fleering taunts, thus his Opponent mocks;
" Sir Wolf, bethink you well that in your time
You have committed many a heinous crime:
How many a Lamb and other harmleſs Beaſt
Your maw have furniſhed with a guilty feaſt;
While I have borne the ſcandal and the blame,
And your bad deeds have ſullied my good name;
But your iniquities henceforth ſhall ceaſe;
And the poor Innocents may reſt in peace.
A boon as gainful 'tis to you, as them,
Your further guilty progreſs now to ſtem;
Your only chance is this your ſoul to ſave;
Yet if my pardon you will humbly crave,
And freely own that vanquiſhed now you are,
I will have mercy, and your life will ſpare."
He ſaid; and griping hard his Foeman's throat,
Again his bleeding cheeks he fiercely ſmote.
But If'grim's ſtrength no longer idle lay;
He gave two vig'rous twiſts, and tore away.

But Reynard at his face once more lets fly,
And ſharply ſtriking him, tears out an eye:
A deep and ghaſtly wound! the ſmoking blood
Adown his cheek in crimſon current flow'd.
"See!" quoth the taunting Fox; "he hath it now!
Avenged am I, and vanquiſhed is my foe!"
But mad with pain and heedleſs of his wound,
The ſavage Wolf with one tremendous bound,
On Reynard ſprang, and bore him to the ground:
His ſaucy courage now began to quail,
His tricks and cunning nothing might avail;
With ſudden ſnap, one of his foremoſt paws
The Wolf has ſeized faſt in his griping jaws:
And Reynard lay half dead with fear and pain,
While thouſand thoughts ſwarmed darting through his brain;
Then Iſegrim, with hot and clammy breath,
And hollow voice, thus muttered 'tween his teeth;
"Thine hour is come! ſurrender on the ſpot!
Or death, upon the inſtant, is thy lot.
Thine hour is come! it little ſhall avail
To ſcratch the duſt up, or bewet thy tail;
To ſhave thy hair; to ſmear thyſelf with greaſe;

Woe on thee, Miſcreant! thou'ſt run out thy leaſe!
Thou'ſt wrought me countleſs ills; told many a lie;
Wounded me ſorely, and torn out mine eye;
But now, eſcape thou ſhalt not; yield or die!"

Thought Reynard then; 'This is an evil hour!
What ſhall I do on earth t' avoid his pow'r?
Me, if I yield not, will this Savage ſlay;
If I do yield, diſgraced am I for aye.
I've earned his hate, for I've abuſed him ſtill,
With wrong and inſult, to my utmoſt ſkill.'

Then, with ſweet words and accents ſoft and ſmooth,
He ſtrove his fierce Opponent's wrath to ſoothe;
" Hear me, good Uncle! I with joy will be
Your Vaſſal, I and all my Family;
A pilgrimage with pleaſure, for your ſake,
Unto the Holy Sepulchre I'll make;
I'll viſit ev'ry church upon my track,
And endleſs abſolutions bring you back;
Your ſoul to benefit theſe cannot fail;
Your bleſſed Parents too they may avail;
Though they may now be in a better place;

Who is there does not need a ſaving Grace?
I'll honor you, as though the Pope you were;
The deepeſt and moſt ſolemn oaths will ſwear,
That I myſelf and all my Relatives
Shall do you homage for our goods and lives;
And ſuit and ſervice will we yield to you,
More than to our liege King we even do.

" Take then my offer, Uncle, while you may;
And all the land ſhall quickly own your ſway:
All that I catch myſelf, to you I'll bring;
Fiſh, Fowls, Ducks, Geeſe and Pigeons—every-
thing!
Yourſelf, your Wife and Children, of all pelf
Shall have firſt choice, ere I will taſte myſelf.
Your ſafety will I watch with anxious eye,
That harm or danger ne'er approach you nigh.
They call me cunning, powerful are you;
Together what great things may we not do!
What a confed'racy were this of ours!
Wiſdom and Strength! who could withſtand ſuch
pow'rs?
To join together *thus* though, but to fight—
That, deareſt Uncle, never can be right!

This combat I had done my beſt to ſhun,
If but it might with honor have been done.
But, as the public challenge came from you,
What, in the name of honor, could I do?
My courteſy I've carried ſuch a length,
I've not, put forth one quarter of my ſtrength:
For to myſelf I ſaid; 'Now, have a care;
'It is but right you ſhould your Uncle ſpare.'
Had I but given way to hate or ſpleen,
How different the iſſue might have been.
You have not ſuffered much; if your poor eye
Have met with an untoward injury,
It happened by the pureſt accident,
For which, with all my ſoul, do I lament.
I know a ſimple and a certain cure,
In which you ſhall participate, be ſure:
Or if the hurt be greater than my ſkill,
You'll have one comforting advantage ſtill:
If you at any time would fain repoſe,
Only one window will you have to cloſe;
While we, unleſs we always keep awake,
A double trouble have to undertake.
" Bethink you then, dear Uncle; all my Kin

Shall kneel before your feet, my grace to win :
Here, in full Court, my Children and my Wife
From you ſhall pray my pardon and my life.
Here will I even publicly declare,
The crimes, I charged you with, but ſlanders were ;
That I have groſſly lied ; nay, I will vow,
That nought againſt your character I know ;
That, for all future time, I never will
Or breathe or think againſt you aught of Ill.

" This freely will I do to ſoothe your ire :
What expiation can you more deſire ?
Kill me ; and where will be the ſlighteſt good ?
My Friends and Kindred will keep up the feud.
Spare me ; and think how in renown you riſe ;
For all will deem you generous and wiſe.
Prove thus how truly noble is your mind ;
Another chance you may not quickly find.
But do your pleaſure ; for you will, I ſee :—
To live or die is all the ſame to me !"

" Falſe Fox!" replied the ſavage Wolf; " how fain
Thou from my grapple wouldſt be looſe again !
But were the world one lump of fire-tried gold,

And offered here, my vengeance to withold,
I would not, baſe Diſſembler, let thee go:
What value are thine oaths, full well I know.
What for thy Friends or Kindred do I care?
Their enmity methinks I well may bear.
Well might'ſt thou at my ſilly weakneſs ſcoff,
If proteſtations now could get thee off.
Of thy forbearance thou doſt boaſting ſpeak!
How is't mine eye hangs bleeding on my cheek?
By thine infernal claws is not my hide
In twenty places ſcored and ſcarified?
When panting I was worn almoſt to death,
What leiſure didſt thou grant to fetch my breath?
Pardon and Mercy! That is not the way
That Injury and Inſult I repay!
Me thou haſt baſely wronged; and my poor Wife—
Ah! thou ſhalt pay the forfeit with thy life!"

Thus ſpake the Wolf; the crafty Fox meanwhile,
Who ſaw that nothing could be gained by guile,
Uſing the other hand he ſtill had free,
Gripped hold of his Opponent ſavagely;
And in ſo very ſenſitive a part,
The ſtartled Wolf howled with the ſick'ning ſmart.

Swift then the Fox withdrew his other paw
From the huge chaſm of that portentous jaw;
With both his Foeman hard and faſt he clenched,
And lugged and ſcratched and haled and nipped
and wrenched,
That Iſegrim ſcreamed out, till blood he ſpate,
And brake with pain into a ſeething ſweat.
Glad Reynard deemed his conqueſt now ſecure;
Yet, tooth and nail, held firm, to make all ſure;
While the Wolf, ſpent and ſprawling undermoſt,
Stifled and blind, himſelf gave up for loſt.
The ſanguine ſtream in copious currents flows,
Adown his beard, from eyes and mouth and noſe.
Oh! not for heaps of wealth and boundleſs gold,
The triumph of that hour had Reynard ſold!
The more his Foe grew faint and weak, the more
He griped and pinched and bit and clawed and tore;
I' th' duſt the Wolf rolled, with dull, hollow ſobs,
Geſtures unſeemly and convulſive throbs.
With wailings loud his Friends the Monarch
prayed
He would command the combat might be ſtayed:
The King replied; "E'en ſo then let it be,



If you all wiſh it; 'tis all one to me."
Then Noble bids the Marſhals of the liſt
To cauſe the Champions from the fight deſiſt.
The Lynx and Libbard quick are at their poſt,
And Reynard as the Conqu'ror thus accoſt;
'Enough! the King doth now his mandate ſend
The combat ſhall conclude, the ſtrife ſhall end.
He wills you ſpare the life of Iſegrim,
And leave the iſſue of the day to Him.
If either of the Twain ſhould loſe his life
We all had reaſon to regret the ſtrife.
The vict'ry, Reynard, reſts with you; we own
That you right nobly your devoir have done;
And have from all golden opinions won."
Then Reynard ſaid; "To all my thanks I pay;
And gladly will the King's beheſts obey;
Too proud to do whatever he require:
Victor! what triumph can I more deſire?
But that my cauſe I may not prejudice
I humbly crave to aſk my Friends' advice."
Then Reynard's Friends with one accord replied;
"We think it beſt the King were ſatisfied."
And round him gathered in tumultuous flocks

The Relatives of the victorious Fox;
The Beaver and the Otter and the Ape,
With Greybeard, wiſhed him joy of his eſcape.
And many greeted him as Friends, of thoſe
Who theretofore had been his deareſt Foes;
The Squirrel and the Weaſel and the Stoat,
The Ermine too, and ſome of leſſer note,
Who formerly would ſcarcely ſpeak his name,
Kindred with him are now too glad to claim.
In fine, he found no end of Relatives,
Who brought with them their Children and their
Wives;
While Great and Little with each other vie,
To laviſh compliments and flattery.
In the World's circle fares it ever thus;
Good wiſhes rain upon the Proſperous;
But the unfortunate or needy man
May e'en get through his troubles as he can.
So fares it now; and all the Courtiers ſtrive
How honor to the Victor they may give.
Some ſing; ſome play the flute; the hautboy, ſome;
Some blow the trumpet; others beat the drum;
And his now num'rous Friends in chorus cry;

" Hail! happy day of joy and victory!
Hail! conqu'ring Hero! unto whom we trace
The honor and renown of all our Race.
How did we grieve when wounded there you lay!
How glad we greet the iſſue of the fray!"
And Reynard anſwered; " Thanks, my worthy
Friends!
For all I've borne your kindneſs makes amends:"
Then, while behind in ſwarming crowds they preſt,
Marched onward with the Marſhals of the liſt;
And thus with acclamations loud they bring
The Conqueror in triumph to the King.
So ſoon as they arrived before the throne,
The Fox with humble bearing knelt him down;
But the good Monarch motioned him to riſe,
And then addreſſed him thus, in gracious wiſe;
" The day is yours by right of victory;
And from all forfeit We pronounce you free.
With all Our Barons counſel ſhall be ta'en,
So ſoon as Iſegrim is whole again:
Then will We judge the cauſe as beſt We may.
The matter is concluded for to-day."
" Your reſolution, Sire;" with bow profound

Said wily Reynard, " is both wife and found.
Whate'er be the opinions of the Reft,
Yours muft prevail; for ever You know beft.
" How many here confpired to lay me low,
And lied, to gratify my pow'rful Foe.
When I was hardeft preft by Ifegrim,
How they all clamored then—' Down, down with
him !'
All to delight the Wolf; for all could fee
I ftood not in Your favor high as he.
They little thought how the affair would end:—
And each of thefe is now my worthy Friend.
" Such Knaves are like unto a pack of Hounds,
Whom once I noted in a rich Man's grounds;—
For a true ftory, Sire, is this I tell,
Though it commenceth like a parable.—
In groups they waited round the kitchen door,
Where ofttimes they had been regaled before,
In eager expectation, fome ftray bone
Might by the Scullion's kindnefs forth be thrown.
A piece of flefh the foremoft of the lot
Contrived to pilfer fmoking from the pot;
With his rich booty quick he hurried off;

But not, unluckily, quite quick enough:
For the vexed Scullion, when the theft ſhe ſpied,
Flung all the boiling water on his hide.
He kept his booty though, deſpite the pain,
And his expectant Comrades joined again.
They to each other cried; 'Why, only look!
'How our dear Friend is favored of the Cook!'
They cringed to him and fawned in various ways,
And ſpoke no end of nonſenſe in his praiſe.
'All mighty fine!' the ſcalded Hound replied;
'But ere you judge, firſt hear the other ſide.
'Worthy of envy you my ſtate may find,
'As ſeen in front; but, look at me behind.'
And ſaying this his back to them he turned,
And ſhewed his rump naked as though 'twere
burned.
Seeing his hairleſs hide all creaſed and ſhrunk,
Great fear fell on them, and away they ſlunk;
They left him ſtanding there all bare and lone;
And not one ventured back to ſeek a bone.
"Such is the fate, Sire, of the Covetous;
They proſper and they periſh ever thus:
In pow'r they find no lack of eager Friends,

Who fawn upon them for their ſelfiſh ends;
With kind indulgence all their foibles treat,
Becauſe their mouths are haply full of meat:
From All they look for and receive reſpect;
For who will dare the Proſp'rous to neglect?
Allies in Old and Young alike they find,
Until misfortune falls on them behind:
Their enviable lot then alters quick,
Their former Friends to them no longer ſtick,
But right and left fall off, like ſcalded hair,
And leave them in their ſorrow, lone and bare;
Or as that ſycophantic pack of Hounds
Forſook their Comrade, when they ſaw his wounds.

"Ah! Sire; all humble though he be, and weak,
Shall None of Reynard thus have cauſe to ſpeak.
I ſet ſome value on my honeſt name;
My Friends through me ſhall never come to ſhame.
One only miſſion have I to fulfil;
To learn and execute my Sov'reign's will."

"What need more words?" thus did the King reply;
"We comprehend the matter perfectly.
To you as a free Baron We reſtore

All privileges you e'er held before.
Henceforth at Court Our favor ſhall you meet,
And at Our Privy Council take your ſeat.
To pow'r and honor will we raiſe you up;
And you ſhall well deſerve it, as we hope.
Whatever faults are charged on you, 'tis clear
We never can afford to miſs you here.
Of all your Peers none can above you riſe,
If only you prove virtuous as wiſe.
No freſh complaints againſt you will we hear,
No matter what Complainants may appear.
Nay, to evince Our confidence ſtill more,
We now appoint you Lord High Chancellor;
And here Our Seal deliver to your hand;
That what you do or write, throughout the land,
Shall be as writ or done by Our command."

While all th' aſſembled Peers to Reynard bow'd,
And wiſhed him joy with gratulations loud;
Thus to the King he ſpake; "Theſe honors, Sire,
Are more than I deſerve, or dared deſire.
But by my deeds I'll prove my grateful mind;
For words are, at the beſt, but idle wind."

How it with Iſegrim meanwhile did fare,

Shall in a few brief words be made appear.
Still in the lifts he lay upon the ground,
Faint and begaſhed with many a ghaſtly wound.
His Wife and Friends all haſtened to him there;
Tybalt the Cat came with the ſhaggy Bear;
Theſe to his Kin and Children gave their aid;
The wounded Wolf they on a litter laid,
Well bolſtered round, to keep him warm, with hay;
And bore him, mourning, from the field away.
They ſearch his wounds, and count one ſcore and ſix;
And Leeches come and bandages affix,
And with rare unguents all his limbs anoint,
For ſprained was he and lame in ev'ry joint;
And herbs they rub of pungent qualities
Into his eyes and noſe, to make him ſneeze.
And they conſulted long, and did their beſt
To calm his Friends and give their Patient reſt.
He ſlept at length, but not as they could wiſh;
His ſlumbers were diſturbed and feveriſh;
And when he woke, 'twas with a burning brain,
Unto a mingled ſenſe of ſhame and pain.
So poignant and ſo deep his feelings were,

He howled aloud with anguiſh and deſpair.
And Gieremund, his all but widowed Wife,
Watched o'er the ebb and flow of her Lord's life;
His ſuff'rings ſtirred up all her ſympathies,
And with her ſobs and groans ſhe anſwered his;
And looking at her own and Children's doom,
She ſaw the future ſhrouded o'er with gloom;
And no bright proſpects in the diſtance loom.

But Reynard's Friends loud ſongs of triumph raiſe,
Till he is almoſt tired of his own praiſe.
In higheſt ſpirits then he left the Court;
The King had granted him a brave Eſcort;
And, when he took his leave, was pleaſed to ſay;
"We truſt you will not long remain away."
Then did the Fox before the Monarch kneel,
Saying; "Ah! could I ſpeak the thanks I feel
To You, Sire, and my gracious Lady dear,
And, I may add, to every body here.
May Heav'n eternal bleſſings on You ſhower;
Would to confer them were but in my power.
"And now with grateful, though with humble heart,
I crave Your kind permiſſion to depart;

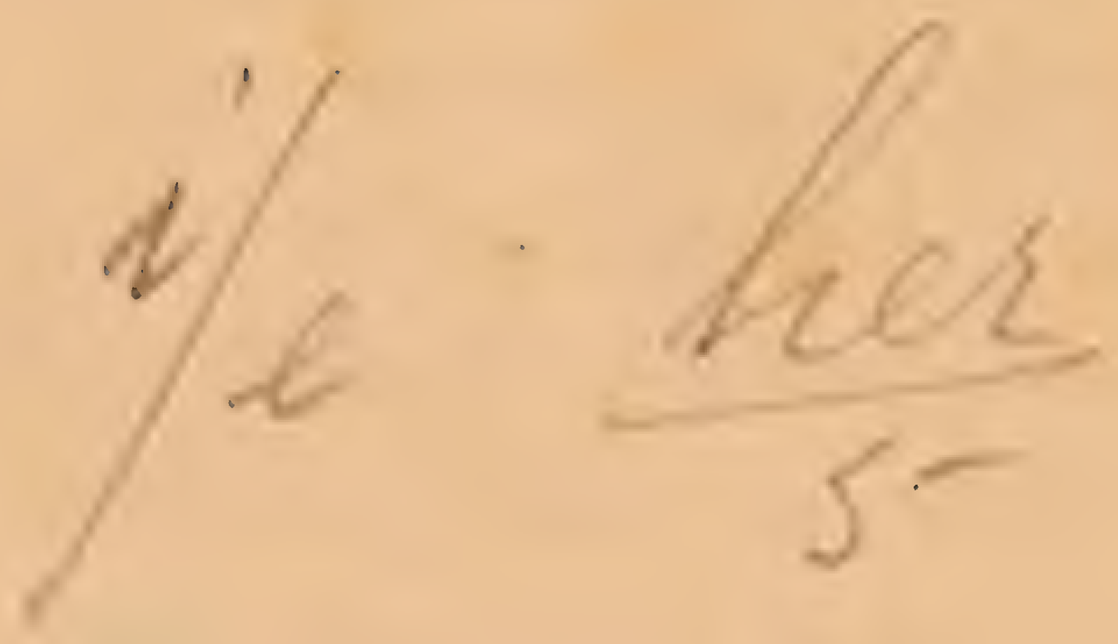
And to my Wife and Children home return,
Who ſtill with anxious tears my abſence mourn."
" Depart in peace!" replied the mighty King;
" And fear not any man or any thing."
So Reynard left with all his Kin; two ſcore
There were who with him journeyed, if not more.
All full of triumph and of joy they are,
And in their Kinſman's glory hope to ſhare.
While he himſelf his tranſports noway veils;
But ſtalks as proud as though he had two tails;
To think he'd won ſuch honor by ſheer wit,
And how the braveſt uſe to make of it.
' This realm henceforth (thus to himſelf
thought he)
On true Fox principles ſhall governed be,
By members only of my Family.
A certain proof the world may thus behold
How much more wiſdom is of worth than gold.'
Thus he, with all his Friends, as an eſcort,
Reached Malepartus, his domeſtic fort.
He thanked them for the ſympathy they'd ſhewn,
When he in peril's hour had ſtood alone;
And promiſed all their kindneſs to repay:

Then they departed, and went each his way.
His dwelling then he entered, where he found
His Wife and Children haply ſafe and found.
How Ermelyne rejoiced to ſee her Lord
To her fond arms alive and well reſtor'd!
And earneſtly ſhe prayed him to relate
By what good chance he 'ſcaped his threatened fate.
Reynard replied; "It was not chance, dear Wife,
But ſkill and cunning that have ſaved my life.
Again with Noble reconciled am I;
Ne'er in his favor have I ſtood ſo high.
He's called me to his Council, as of yore,
And in full Court has named me Chancellor;
Has giv'n into my keeping the Great Seal;
And henceforth I ſhall rule the Commonweal.
"The Wolf have I in battel overcome;
In future are his lips for ever dumb;
Wounded he lies, diſabled and diſgraced;
My marks of vengeance on him have I placed.
Her ſtreams of ſorrow may his Wife unſluice;
Henceforth her Huſband is of little uſe.
But nothing ſhall I grieve on that account;
Vanquiſhed is he, and I, Lord Paramount.
Be of good cheer then, Love; for happy hours

The future hath in ſtore for us and ours."
Great was the Vixen's gladneſs; while her Boys
Their Sire half deafened with their frantic joys.
They friſked and ſprang about on every ſide;
" Oh, happy day! oh, joyful hour!" they cried;
" Who upon earth ſo fortunate as we?
For honored through our Father ſhall we be.
Our Enemies we now may ſet at nought,
And have it our own way, as Foxes ought."
Now Reynard lives in honor and in ſtate;
Then let us all his wiſdom imitate;
Eſchew the Evil and ſelect the Good:
This moral points our tale, when underſtood.
The truth with fables hath the Poet mixed,
That Virtue in your hearts may be infixed;
And you who purchaſe and peruſe this poem
May ſee the ways o'th' world, and learn to know 'em;
As it has been, is now, and aye will be.—
Here then ends Reynard's life and hiſtory;
And with a bow we here lay down our pen.
The Lord preſerve us evermore. Amen!

THE END.

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